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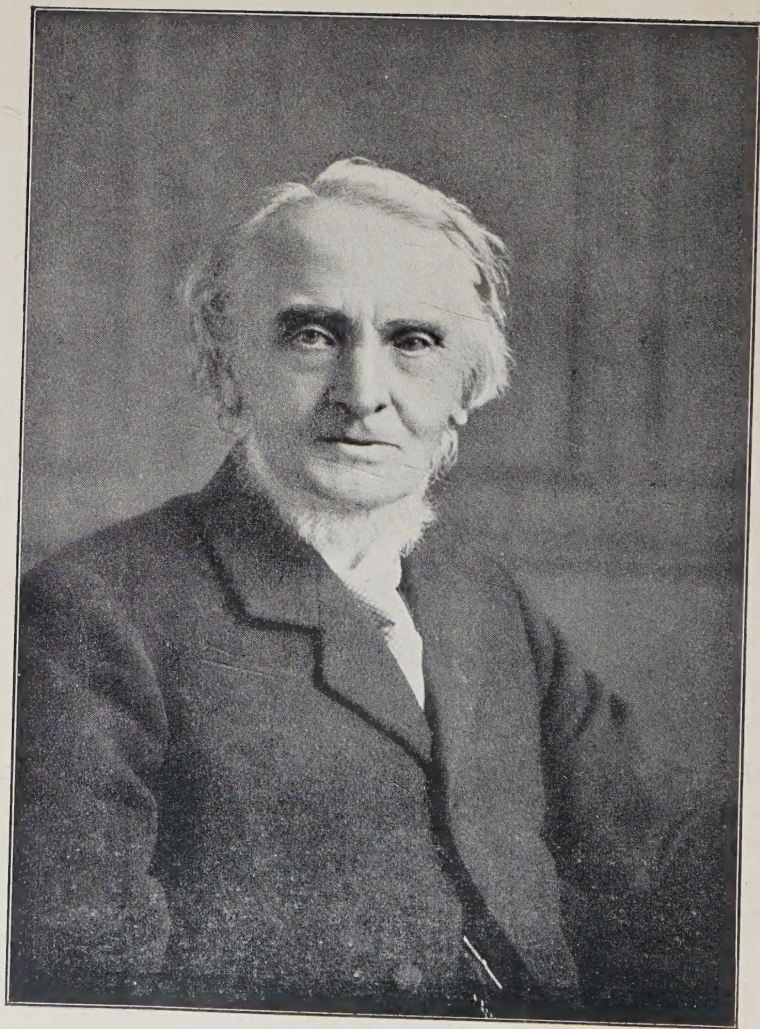
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THE STORY OF THE ENGLISH
BAPTISTS





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REV. ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D.D.

THE STORY OF THE ENGLISH BAPTISTS

RELATED BY

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LONDON

JAMES CLARKE & CO., 13 & 14 FLEET STREET

1905

PREFACE

I HAVE often been asked to recommend a popular history of the Baptists, and have been reluctantly compelled to reply there is no history of the English Baptists in print. The works of Crosby, Ivimey and Evans, good as far as they go, have long been out of print. The collecting of materials for this "Story" was commenced years ago at the suggestion of my friend and colleague upon the London School Board, Dr. Angus. The information grew to such proportions that I had to choose between a detailed history in three or four volumes and a popular story. I hope that this recital of the "deeds of the noble dead" will not only supply a demand, but create a desire for ampler information. Great care has been taken to secure accuracy in every detail, but this is intended to be a story rather than a detailed history. No one is more conscious of its omissions than I am. Some ancient legends which have done much to justify the dictum that "history is fable agreed upon" have been excluded.

I am indebted to Dr. Dixon, of the MSS. Department of the British Museum, Mr. Atkinson, of the Public Records Office, Rev. J. B. Myers, and Mr. G. E. Evans for their ready assistance.

If young Baptists by meditating upon the portraits of their ancestors catch something of their splendid heroism and deathless faith and are made stronger to wage the old war against unrighteousness, I shall have my reward.

JOHN C. CARLILE.

Folkestone.

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THE STORY OF THE ENGLISH BAPTISTS

CHAPTER I

THE PIONEERS OF BAPTIST TEACHING

WHEN Augustine and his monks settled at Canterbury, they found the fabric of an old church in which Christianity had been proclaimed from the time before the English came. There was another church building from which the monks made the beginning of the cathedral. Who planted these churches in Britain is still the subject of pretty legend and guesswork. We do know that the British bishops or pastors made Augustine angry about their baptism, to which he objected. The reason of his objection is unknown. Probably the dispute was to determine whether baptism was a single or triune immersion. Augustine baptised his converts in the river Swale. It was the custom to hold baptismal services in the open air. The earliest baptistries were built by the door of the church. "The laver of regeneration" was a well or tank, round or cruciform in plan; the brim was level with the pavement. Steps were provided upon the right and left sides by which the catechumens—converts who had received some instruction—descended and ascended with the minister. From the days of the British bishops until now baptism has been the subject of controversy. Men who agreed upon nothing

else joined in protesting against the teaching symbolised in "the laver of regeneration." The protest was not trivial; it cost thousands of precious lives. It was not a question of how much water should be used. In the darkest days of the Church's history, there had been a change of belief in reference to the meaning and the mode of baptism. The simplicity of the rite, which was intended to be a public confession of unity with Christ by faith in His death, burial, and resurrection, was lost in superstitious symbolism. The ceremony had come to be regarded as the means whereby a bad man was made good and brought into a new relationship to God. Cyprian asserts in the plainest terms that "remission of sin is granted to every man in baptism," and that "the water must be sanctified by the priest, that it may have power to wash away the sins of men." Justin taught that men "may obtain in the water forgiveness of sins formerly committed." Augustine, the famous Bishop of Hippo, clearly teaches that baptised infants dying in infancy are saved, and that infants not baptised are damned. He says, "God makes to be strangers to His kingdom, whither He sends their parents, some of the sons of His friends—*i.e.*, of regenerated and good believers—who go forth hence in childhood without baptism, for whom He, in whose power are all things, might, if He would, procure the grace of this font."

Those who protested against this dogma represented in baptism regarded it not as a modification, but as a contradiction, of the teaching of Scripture. It introduced an element altogether at variance with the Gospel and destructive of its meaning. It necessitated a priesthood with powers not given to all believers. If the ceremony had rested upon the religious character of the person who performed it, then it would have been frequently in doubt. Its efficacy depended, save in very exceptional cases, upon the official status of the person baptising and the observance of a certain order of administration. It resolved itself into a question of "Holy Orders." A council

of Carthage in the time of Cyprian declared that "the water is sanctified by the prayer of the priest to wash away sin."

The first authenticated instance of changing the form of baptism from immersion to sprinkling is that of Novatian, who was sprinkled in his illness about A.D. 250. Eusebius says, "He fell into a grievous distemper, and it being supposed that he would die immediately, he received baptism, being sprinkled with water on the bed whereon he lay, if that can be termed baptism." The first law to sanction aspersion as a mode of baptism was made by Pope Stephen II. (A.D. 753). The earliest definite mention of infant baptism is at the close of the second century by Tertullian at Carthage. He opposed the practice on the ground of expediency. The changes in the mode and meaning of baptism were becoming common in the west about the eighth century. They were opposed by men who refused to admit the Church's right to depart from the express command of the Scripture.

In her defence, the official Church was driven to the position, which even now does not seem entirely renounced, that in baptism the action of a man, not necessarily a good man, done thoughtlessly, providing he is a priest and has observed a certain form, would invariably and of necessity create such a change in an unconscious child that the infant would occupy a new relation to God, to Christ, and to the kingdom of heaven. Dr. Beet remarks, "This is salvation, not by faith, but by legerdemain." The Hon. and Rev. B. H. Noel says, "I once laboured hard to convince myself that our reformers did not, and could not, mean that infants were regenerated in baptism, but no reasoning avails." It is impossible to estimate the number of those who, rather than acquiesce in this teaching even by silence, faced the horrors of the Church's excommunication, and bore the penalties the priests know so well how to set in motion. The first penal law concerning religious opinion in England related to baptism. It is in the ecclesiastical code of Ine, the West Saxon monarch. It was made in 693. It

says, "Let a child be baptised within thirty nights. If it be otherwise, let the father make satisfaction with thirty shillings. If he then die without baptism, let him make satisfaction with all that he hath" (Wilkins' "Concilia," i. 58). The canon of Eggerht Archbishop of York, A.D. 740, says, "Let the parent whose child is dead without baptism through his neglect never live without penance. If the priest whose duty it was neglected to come when asked, let him be chastised by the law of the bishop for the damnation of a soul. Nay, it is commanded that all men should snatch a soul from the devil by baptism."

The spiritual gifts and duties belonging to the priesthood of all believers were exercised by the few until their possession was denied to all but the clergy. The very name *cleros*, which Peter applied to the Church as the flock of God when he warned the pastors against becoming "lords over God's heritage," by the irony of history came to mean the "clergy," the technical term for the whole order of lords spiritual ordained to exercise lordship over Christ's sheep. With the rise of priestly power there was a corresponding deterioration of priestly character. Not only had the ministry become a profession and means of livelihood: it had also become a lucrative profession. The great increase in the wealth of the Churches had fostered the growth of a class of clergy who were almost completely secularised. They hunted; they hawked; they traded; they lent money upon usury: and with the secularisation of their office came the degradation of its ideal of living. The organisation of the Romish Church in England was accomplished by Theodore, a native of Tarsus, in Cilicia, who was sent by Pope Vitalian in 668. This masterful archbishop, inflexibly true to his Roman principles, set out to establish the authority of Canterbury over all bishops in England, and to organise a legislative body for the Church. By the division of the country into territorial areas, each with a *persona ecclesiæ*, or "parson," responsible for all spiritual matters, the power of the Church was supreme. It was the

duty of the parson to stamp out heresy, and in most cases that duty was so well done that all traces of free companies of worshippers were destroyed. "The outlaw of God," as the heretic was called, and the outlaw of the king, the excommunicated man and the convicted criminal, were alike set without the protection of the law. The power of the prelates became very great. Odo, as Archbishop of Canterbury, was Prime Minister to Edmund and Edred, and left the position to Dunstan and a long line of successors. The statesmen bishops so completely identified the Church and State that it is almost impossible to divide the action of the one from the other. The power of the Church over its subjects was as real as the authority of the State over the citizens. During the centuries in which these changes in life and teaching were accomplished the presence of Christianity is indicated by the smoke of smouldering embers rather than the flame of fire.

The story of the heroic struggle against the Church's attempt to impose authority over conscience is told in the history of the Baptists. Professor Masson says: "Not to the Church of England, nor to Scottish Presbyterianism, nor to English Puritanism at large does the honour of the first perception of the full principle of liberty of conscience and its first assertion in English speech belong. That honour has to be assigned, I believe, to the Independents generally, and to the Baptists in particular." Bancroft declares that "freedom of conscience, unlimited freedom of mind, was from the first the trophy of the Baptists." Mr. Skeats affirms that "it is the singular and distinguished honour of the Baptists to have repudiated, from their earliest history, all coercive power over the consciences and the actions of men with reference to religion." The Baptists' claim to the foremost place among the pioneers of religious freedom is made by those who do not bear their name.

Baptists do not appear in the field of history as well-organised bodies, moving with the precision of drilled

regiments; they were an advance guard, necessarily united in spirit and teaching, rather than identical in denominational machinery. They have been called by various names, from which time has taken the sting and the stigma. Even "Baptist" and "Anabaptist" once struck terror into brave hearts, as now "Anarchist" and "Nihilist" in Russia are titles which may cost the lives of those who own them. Baptists have been a series of human documents in evidence of the sovereignty of the individual conscience. Hans Denck, one of the earliest Anabaptists, taught that each man had a Teacher within himself, who, if rightly followed, would lead him in the path of duty, and whose prompting must be obeyed at any cost. "This I know in myself to be the truth," said Denck; "therefore I will, if God will, listen to what it shall say to me. Him that would take it from me I will not permit." Many writers have issued text-books of distinctive denominational principles. Baptists have not been successful with any such work. They have not been without "settled convictions," nor have they expressed their views with that studied ambiguity which is the charm of inoffensive persons who make no losses over religion. The heralds of the Baptists represent a spirit rather than a sect. Their text-book of principles is the New Testament. They are not happy in their nickname. Some refuse to be called Baptists, preferring the more Scriptural term "disciples" or "brethren." They might just as reasonably be called Supperists as Baptists. They attach no more importance to the one symbolical service than to the other. The immersion of believers is now their peculiarity, but not their principle. The question of the quantity of water used in baptism may be of great importance to some minds, but it was not for that the early Baptists sacrificed their lives.

Some writers have insisted upon the historic continuity of the practice of immersion from the time when the Saviour went down into the water to be baptised by John and came

up out of the water to begin that ministry which did not end at Calvary. After all, the only apostolic succession that can be proved or is worth proving is the succession of the truth held by the Apostles. Paul says: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." In 1633 the Baptists in London put it on record that they determined "not to receive or practise any piece of positive worship that had no precept or example in the word of God." Long before they recognised that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, which made the destiny of the soul depend upon a priestly ceremony instead of a personal character, was fatal to Christ's teaching.

In the proceedings of the Court of Wareham for 1511, there is an account of a little company of men and women from Tenterden who dared to say that the Sacrament of Baptism was not necessary to the salvation of the soul. They were tried and condemned to be burned. They recanted. Nineteen years after there was published a tract entitled "The Sum of Scripture," in which there is this fine passage on baptism:—"The water in the font has no more virtue in it than the water of the river; the baptism lies not in hallowed water, or in any other outward thing, but in faith only. The water of baptism is nothing but a sign that we must be under the standard of the Cross."

William of Newbury gives us a glimpse of Henry II.'s treatment of certain heretics. My lord of Worcester drew attention to a company of *publicani*, as the old chronicler calls them. They were weavers, working at their trade. They had been in England seven years. They preached the Gospel regularly. There was one known convert to their views. They had a weaving school at Cordes, where men also learned to preach. Their teaching had a communistic strain; they lived together. A council of bishops was called at Oxford to examine the charges against the weavers. Gerard, one of their number, answered so well that the bishops gave

up arguing with him. It seems that Gerard admitted that they believed in the sovereignty of the Divine Christ, but rejected the authority of the Church as represented by the bishops, and that they did not believe in the efficacy of baptism and the Eucharist. Their enemies added that they did not believe in marriage, but there is no evidence of this. The bishops could not terrorise them. Gerard firmly refused to recant, and, by the authority of the King, the decree of a council held at Rheims in 1157 directing the punishment for heretics was carried out. The weavers, stripped to the waist, were led through the city of Oxford, being scourged as they went. Afterwards they were branded with a hot iron upon the forehead, and this was in the depth of winter. Gerard was also marked upon the chin. The character of the man is shown in the tradition which tells that when the proclamation was made that no man should give them food or shelter, and they were driven out into the falling snow, Gerard's words were, "Blessed shall ye be when men shall hate you." In 1182, according to Roger of Hoveden, the *publicani* had become very numerous in England. They were absorbed in after-years by the communities of "strangers" who sought in our land refuge from persecution.

Baptists derived part of their faith from the Waldenses, who came to England to escape persecution. These people have a history full of romance. Their leader or founder was Peter Waldo or Valdez. Perhaps in Valdez there is an indication that he came from the canton of Vaud. In 1150 Peter was established in Lyons as a wealthy trader. He appears to have been in the prime of life when he became greatly concerned about his salvation. The rites of the Church did not help him. He turned for guidance to a learned confessor, and was told that there were many ways by which one might be saved. "Tell me," said Peter, "of all the roads that lead to heaven, which is the surest. I desire to follow the perfect way." To this his instructor replied in the words of Jesus, "If thou

wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, take up thy cross, and follow Me." The more Peter thought upon this reply, the more imperative it became for him to obey. As his wife did not share his views, he divided his wealth with her, and out of his part provided for his two daughters; the rest of his money he gave to the poor. He engaged two priests to prepare a version of the Gospels and Psalms in the common language of the people. The new light could not be hidden. Peter began to tell the story of the Cross. The crowds that used to listen to the strolling minstrel's rude verse stopped to hear the recital of the Gospel. Men received the truth, and the fame of the Gospel reciter soon spread. He was welcomed in town and village. The Archbishop of Lyons objected to the new movement, and Peter appealed to the Pope, but while it is reported that the Pope kissed him, he insisted that he should not tell the people the Gospel before having permission of the diocesan. That caused Peter to break with the Church. There was no doubt that God had blessed the Word as it had been recited. Peter could not believe that it was wrong to give the people the Bible "without note or comment." After a while he began again without permission. His converts learned the story that had changed their lives, and went out to repeat it to others. So numerous did they become in Southern France that they were condemned by the Council of Verona in 1183, and expelled from Lyons. The poor men of Lyons became the centre of a great spiritual awakening, which spread over Continental Europe, and remains one of the most remarkable demonstrations of the power of the Gospel which history supplies. It is more than probable that Waldensian refugees were settled at Darenth, in Kent, in 1181. In Burn's "History of Henley," there is a reference to a lease dated the sixth year of Henry IV., in which is mentioned a chapel, "formerly that of the Waldenses." The followers of Peter Waldo came very early to England. They believed that the words of Christ

were sufficient for salvation and godly living ; that baptism was not profitable to infants, as they were not able to believe ; that the oblation made by the priests in the Mass was of no value. They were also charged with the crime of refusing to take an oath, and for no reason would they slay. They shared the life of the common people. The districts in which the Waldenses settled certainly became the homes of the Anabaptists. In the Divine providence, denominations arise to bear witness to new or forgotten truths. When the truths for which they stood are accepted by the larger community, the reason for their separate life passes away, and as organisations they die or exist simply as fossils. The Waldenses stood for the liberty of all believers to tell the message of the love of God to the world, as opposed to the claim of a class to be the sole agents of communication between God and men. It was part of the long conflict between the Message and the Mass.

Some writers have shown a genius for discovering distant relations by slight resemblances. Many of the men who were too Christian to find a home in the State Church held principles which logically involved acceptance of the Baptist position, just as Wycliffe expressed opinions concerning the rights of the people to the land which, in the view of Socialists, justify them in calling Wycliffe the father of the economic gospel proclaimed by Henry George in "Progress and Poverty." By this process of reasoning Wycliffe has been called a Baptist. He declares "that those are fools and presumptuous which affirm such infants not to be saved which die without baptism, and that all sins are abolished in baptism." The great reformer was not always so explicit when speaking upon the subject, though his bitter opponent, Walsingham, upbraids him most of all for denying infant baptism, and Walden declares him "one of the seven heads that rose up out of the bottomless pit for denying infant baptism, that heresy of the Lollards, of whom he is so great a ringleader." The "Oxford movement"

Wycliffe initiated has left a clear impression upon the religious life of England. The travelling evangelical men sent out by Wycliffe proclaiming the Gospel were "local preachers" four hundred years before Wesley's glorious revival. The Bible men carried the New Testament among the people. It is interesting to notice that the Baptist Church at Hay, in Brecknockshire, has many traditions of the Lollard days. At Amersham, where the Lollards flourished, the Baptists were settled in the seventeenth century. The story of the Lollards loses its distinctness early in the sixteenth century. From this time Anabaptists are clearly defined in English history. There was every likelihood that some of the Lollards would join the new sect, whose moderate leaders held views very similar to their own. And this may account for the fact that in some districts where Lollardy had been strongest, and notably in South Bucks, we find Baptists numerous in the next century. (See "Our Lollard Ancestors," p. 107.)

The Anabaptists believed in the Scriptures interpreted by the Divine Spirit in the individual as the supreme authority in all matters of religion. They taught that the true Church was a society of saints living the Christ life on the earth, and that Christ was the Saviour for all. Necessarily they were opposed to a geographical or national Church, including the unregenerate, and governed actually or nominally by a monarch who might be the incarnation of sins which the Church existed to destroy. The early Baptists' faith was a Divine dream of a city of God upon earth, in which all life was regulated by the Holy Spirit, who was not the privilege of a spiritual caste, but the possession of all who lived the life. Their faith made them the pioneers of liberty just as surely as they were the pariahs of history. Their path may be tracked by the blood-marks along the way. While they saw the Divine Spirit in humanity pressed down as a cart overladen with sheaves, they heard the inner voice calling, "Who will go to the help of the Lord against the mighty?" They answered in the solitude of

the soul, "Here am I ; send me." Even noble reformers like Luther and Calvin feared to go all the way with those who declared that in religion there could be no privileged class. The reformers drew back from doctrines that could not find a patron in any prince, or a pattern in any political order they knew. Baptists have stood alone, persecuted by all parties in turn, but never being the persecutors. No sentence is to be found in all their writings inconsistent with the principles of Christian liberty.

In the reign of Henry VIII., the revolt against the authority of the Church of Rome reached England. "There was not a Christian in England" (in the State Church ?) "from the days of Theodore to the days of Cranmer who did not believe that the Pope sat in the chair of St. Peter, and inherited from St. Peter the primacy over the other bishops of the Western Church which St. Peter was supposed to have exercised over the Apostles." The Middle Ages were unpolitical. The only question of real interest was whether in the last resort the prince was inferior to the Pope, or the Pope inferior to the prince. The corruption of the Church in England was bad enough, yet in comparison with Italy, France, and Germany it was very mild. Froude says, "The soul of religion had died out of it for many generations before the Reformation." Could we have gone into church in the days of rough genial Father Latimer, we might have seen people who came upon pilgrimages kneeling to kiss the place where the images stood. At the entrance we might have seen holy cowls, holy girdles, holy beads, holy pardons, and holy shoes for sale. As the people entered they offered their gifts of candles and money, and knelt before the image. Sometimes they would run from one altar to another, peeping at that which the priest held in his hand. They would shout, "Hold up, hold up," and when he did so they would bow in silence, and as they left the church we could have heard them say, "This day I have seen my Maker." The representatives of the monks were like the loafers who now go

on tramp begging and stealing in summer and drifting to the workhouse in winter. "The friar was a compound of mendacity, cunning, shamelessness, and ignorance." They were the natural enemies of the humble souls who, troubled by the wickedness in the Church, gave heed to the Gospel told by strange workmen. The Reformation came to England not in a great religious movement among the people, but in response to the policy of a strong-willed sensualist monarch, whose chief concern was not so much to repudiate the authority of the Pope as to be released from his marriage obligation to Catherine of Arragon. Wolsey, the King's chief Minister, was described by a keen observer as "seven times greater than the Pope himself." The son of poor parents, he rose to be the greatest power in politics. He was the first great Foreign Minister in the modern sense of the term. The bias of his mind was towards "empire craft" rather than Church affairs. In his correspondence there is very little of a religious character. In outlining a policy, the changes in his mood were indicated. At first he would say, "His Majesty will do so-and-so"; then it became, "We will do so-and-so," and finally "I will do so-and-so." While the King and his Ministers were hotly disputing with the Pope over the legality of Henry's marriage, the people were becoming familiar with Tyndale's translation of the New Testament. The Gospel became the basis of English Nonconformity; the doctrine of free grace was the foundation of the Free Churches. The preachers of "soul liberty" and the "brotherhood of believers" appealed to the authority of the "Word" against the claims of the Church. To these common people, uncorrupted by the Court or the Church, the Bible was the charter of liberty. The King, who had received the title of "Defender of the Faith," cast off the Pope's authority, and separated the Church in England from the Church of Rome. Unfortunately, Henry still retained the Romish spirit of bitter hostility to religious freedom. In the year in which he became supreme head of the English Church,

he issued two proclamations of special interest to Baptists. In these we read : "forasmuch as divers and sundry strangers of the sects and false opinions of the Anabaptists and Sacramentarians, being lately come into this realm, where they lurk secretly in divers corners and places, minding craftily and subtilly to provoke and stir the King's loving subjects to their errors." We are told that many "had been induced and encouraged arrogantly and superstitiously to argue and dispute in open places, taverns, and alehouses, not only upon baptism, but also upon the Sacrament of the Altar." To put a stop to these "pestilent fellows," the law is to be invoked. This is followed by the information that many strangers "who had been baptised in infancy, but had contemned that holy Sacrament, and had presumptuously rebaptised themselves, were spreading everywhere their heresies against God and His Holy Scriptures, to the great unquietness of Christendom and perdition of innumerable Christian souls." The King, "daily studying and minding above all things to save his loving subjects from falling into any erroneous opinions," warns them they "must depart from England within twelve days, or, if caught, will suffer the pains of death." The people knew the King too well to suppose that he would hesitate to enforce his cruel threats. It was still fresh in the people's memory that in 1511 the little village of Cranbrook was greatly excited by the arrest of Agnes Grenfell (or Grebil) upon the charge of heresy. The trial was held on the 5th of April, when Mistress Agnes, upon the forced testimony of her own son, was found guilty, because she "Helde and Believed that the Sacramente of the Aulter was but Brede; that Baptysme was notynge worthe; that Confessyon is suffice to be made to God" (British Museum, Lansdowne MS. 97,897).

The King's example in rooting up heresy was followed readily. Sir Thomas More, who had succeeded Wolsey in the chancellery, was more concerned than his predecessor to maintain the faith of the Church. Before him was brought Master

James Bainham, a barrister of the Middle Temple. He was suspected of heresy, for he had married the widow of Simon Fish, who had written "The Beggar's Petition against Papacy." He denied that water could save the soul of a little child. He was committed to prison. The patience of the authorities gave way; they could not persuade Master Bainham to recant. When arguments failed, they tried the rack. The poor man's body was stretched until every limb seemed loose. From the torture-chamber he was carried to the presence of my Lord Bishop of London. Dazed with pain and dreading the twist of the awful machine, he abjured his faith. On the following Sunday the congregation in the church of St. Augustine listened to a sermon against heresy. Before the pulpit sat Master Bainham, an awful example, his white face and sunken eyes bearing witness to the force of the arguments that produced his recantation. There he sat in pain; the rack was not so terrible as the torture of his conscience. While the people listened to the coarse speech from the pulpit they were amazed to see Master Bainham, the culprit, rise from his seat, and, lifting a Bible in his hand, exclaim: "If I should not return to the truth, this Book would damn me, body and soul!" Before the officials could drag him away he had told the startled people that he had felt after recanting the fires of hell in his breast, and besought them with tears to be faithful to God. Poor Master Bainham! They carried him to the Bishop's palace at Fulham. In the stocks by day and the damp cell by night, his courage did not fail. He was removed to Chelsea, and whipped until the blood flowed, but no word of recantation came from him. My Lord Bishop of London tried again and failed. Upon an April morning a crowd gathered at Smithfield. They saw the faggots laid and lit round Master Bainham; they did not see the martyr spirit ascend in a chariot of flame. Is it fancy to suppose that the day of his martyrdom was also the day of his ascension?

The coming of the Dutch gave an impetus to the spread of Baptist teaching. Cranmer had become archbishop, and was called to preside over a convocation that pronounced Anabaptist opinions "detestable heresies, utterly to be condemned," and reaffirmed the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. The convocation asserted that "the Sacrament of Baptism was instituted and ordained as a thing necessary for obtaining everlasting life; that infants must needs be christened because they be born in original sin, which sin must needs be remitted, which cannot be done but by the Sacrament of Baptism, whereby they receive the Holy Ghost, which exerciseth His grace and efficacy in them, and purgeth them from sin by His most secret virtue and operation." Notwithstanding the threats of the bishops, the poor men told their message wherever they could get a hearing. Under the shadow of the trees they gathered in little companies to tell of the grace of God, that was free to all, that was alone powerful enough to change the life and comfort the spirit in trial. Sermons printed in Holland were lent from house to house and read in secret. Their teaching was compared with the Scripture and seen to correspond. The Bishops' Council took alarm. Their action is shown in an entry made by Stowe, the old chronicler :

"The 25th day of May were in St. Paul's Church, London, examined nineteen men and six women, born in Holland, whose opinions were—first, that in Christ is not two natures, God and man; secondly, that Christ took neither flesh nor blood of the Virgin Mary; thirdly, that children born of infidels may be saved; fourthly, that baptism of children is of none effect; fifthly, that the Sacrament of Christ's body is but bread only; sixthly, that he who after baptism sinneth wittingly sinneth deadly, and cannot be saved. Fourteen of them were condemned. A man and woman were burnt in Smithfield; the other twelve of them were sent to other towns, there to be burnt."

In this description there is sufficient accuracy for us to identify the Anabaptist teaching, though it is stated with a crudeness at which we need not be surprised. The views of heretics were very highly coloured by the authorities; it was the old method of the Church to distort the opinions and malign the character of the person they could not silence. The poor Dutchmen had received no honour for the brave fight they made for liberty of thought in matters of religion. A modern historian accords to them this eulogy: "The details are gone; their names are gone. Poor Hollanders they were, and that is all. Scarcely the fact seemed worth the mention, so shortly is it told in a passing paragraph. For them no Europe was agitated; no courts were ordered into mourning; no papal hearts trembled with indignation. At their death the world looked on complacent, indifferent, or exulting. Yet here, too, out of twenty-five poor men and women, were found fourteen who, by no terror of stake or torture, could be tempted to say they believed what they did not believe. History for them has no word of praise; yet they, too, were not giving their blood in vain. Their lives might have been as useless as the lives of most of us. In their deaths they assisted to pay the purchase-money for England's freedom" (Froude, vol. ii., p. 365).

Protestant and Romanist alike viewed with horror the acts of the king-pope, who seemed to divide his energy between establishing a new ecclesiastical order and discovering a new mistress. His attitude towards Baptists was that of cruel persecution. The entries in the State papers tell their own tale. "My Lord of Barrow" is made "High Commissioner of all this country touching the Anabaptists who have come hither out of Holland. He has been at Antwerp and taken some; many have fled. The chief baptiser was a smith, who is fled; the rest who are taken shall suffer death by fire. All the lords of every town are ordered to make search for them and put them to execution. They are in great fear of them in the Low

Countries, as the town of Leeth (Liège?) is all of that set" ("Letters and Papers of State," vol. viii.).

Chapuys to Charles V., June 5th, 1535: "About a score of Dutch Anabaptists have been taken here, of whom thirteen have been condemned to the fire, and will be burnt in different parts of the kingdom, as the King and Cromwell have informed me. The others, who have been reconciled to the Church, will be sent into Flanders to the Queen, to be dealt with as seems right."

In the "Acts of Grace," which pardoned all sorts of offences, there was no mercy for the Anabaptists. Fuller indicates their ceremony of baptism in the description he gives: "Their minds had a by-stream of activity more than sufficed to drive on their vocation, and this waste of their souls they employed in needless speculations, and soon after began to broach their strange opinions, being branded with the general name of Anabaptists. These Anabaptists, for the main, are but Donatists new-dipt!" One of the most notable was Anne Askew, the youngest daughter of Sir William Askew and the friend of Queen Catherine Parr. Charles Kingsley describes her as "that hapless Court beauty." With Joan of Kent, she secretly circulated the Scriptures among persons of exalted position. The charge against her was that she denied that Christ was really in the Mass.

In the time of Henry VIII., the pyx, in which the consecrated Host is kept after Mass is ended, used to be hung over the altar in all the churches. One of the articles demanded by the rebels in Devonshire in the time of Edward VI. was as follows: "We will have the Sacrament hung over the high altar, and there to be worshipped as it was wont to be, and they which will not thereto consent, we will have them die like heretics against the holy catholic faith."

Anne Askew would neither worship the Host, nor would she say that she believed it to be the Lord. She says, "My belief is that the Son of God was born of the Virgin Mary, and is

now glorious in heaven, and will come again from thence at the latter day as He went up, and as for that ye call your god, it is a piece of bread. For the proof thereof, let it but lie in the box three months, and it will be mouldy, and so turn to nothing that is good." It is recorded that when the rack-master at the Tower had tortured the poor lady, Wriothsesley laid aside his robe and turned the rack himself. Anne was then taken to the Guildhall to be examined by the Lord Mayor. "Sayest thou now that the priests cannot make the body of Christ?" his lordship demanded. "I say so, my lord," bravely answered the voice heavy with pain, "for I have read that God made man; but that man can make God I have never yet read." The next question would surprise us if we did not remember that the Church of Rome gives directions to her priests as to what should be done if the consecrated Host should be carried away by an animal, a mouse, and could not be found. "If a mouse eat of the bread after the consecration, what should become of the mouse, thou foolish woman?" Anne would not be drawn. She simply asked, "What should become of her, say you, my lord?" He replied, "I say the mouse is damned." To this the woman's wit added, "Alack, poor mouse!"

She was condemned to die, but nothing would persuade her to deny that which her conscience taught her to be true. Her life had been too full of pain for her to be afraid. Her husband, a violent Papist, drove her out of his house because of her faith. Many trials had come to her. She did not shrink the last, though it was the greatest of all. Unable to walk, she was carried in a chair to her doom at Smithfield. There she was burned, while the heavens seemed to the shuddering mob to speak their wrath and grief in solemn thunder peals and heavy drops, which hissed upon the crackling pile.

By the authority of Edward VI., a Commission was appointed in 1549, consisting of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops

of Ely, Worcester, Chichester, Lincoln, and Rochester, Sir William Petrie, Sir Thomas Smith, Dr. May, and some others, to search after Anabaptists, heretics, and contemners of the Common Prayer. If they could not reclaim them they were to excommunicate and finally to deliver them to the secular power for punishment.

Joan of Kent was the victim of the Commission. For a year attempts were made to terrify her into recanting. She made the Anabaptist confession of faith. She was a person of quality. Strype says "she was a great dispenser of Tyndale's New Testament and a great reader of Scripture herself, which book she also dispensed in the Court, and so became known to certain women of quality, and acquainted with Anne Askew. She used for the greater secrecy to tie the books with strings under her apparel and so pass with them into the Court." When it was determined that Joan should be burned attempts were made to dissuade the Archbishop from the task, but it was in vain. Mr. Rogers, the divinity reader in St. Paul's, could not move the Primate. It is reported that after a long entreaty he was met with refusal and the statement, "It may so happen that you yourselves shall have your hands full of this mild burning." In the reign of Mary Mr. Rogers was the first man who was burned as a heretic. Joan of Kent, whose name is variously given as Bocher, Boucher, and Bucher, stood fast to her faith. She said to the Bishop, "Not long since you burned Anne Askew for a piece of bread, and yet came yourselves to believe and profess the same doctrine for which you burned her, and now, forsooth, you must needs burn me for a piece of flesh, and in the end will come to believe this also when you have read the Scriptures and understand them." This last reference was to the belief of the Anabaptists that the Redeemer did not take the sinful flesh of Mary into His nature. Tradition has identified Joan of Kent with the Church now worshipping at Eythorne. It is quite clear from the reference that there were many Baptists in Kent. Goadby says that the

congregations were neither few nor unimportant. Writing of Essex and Kent, Bishop Hooper notes that the district is troubled with the frenzy of the Anabaptists more than any other part of the kingdom ("Original Letters," vol. i., p. 87).

The story of Michael Thombe is briefly told in the Cranmer Register (74). He was charged with the Baptist heresy. Imprisonment seems to have broken his spirit, if it did not affect his mind. On the 11th of May, 1549, in the august presence of the Archbishop at Lambeth, Thombe recanted and set his seal to the following document: "I, Michael Thombe, of London, butcher, of my pure heart and free will, voluntarily and sincerely acknowledge, confess, and openly recognise, that in times past I thought, believed, said, held, and affirmed these errors, heresies, and damnable opinions following, that is to say that (whether) Christ took no flesh of our Lady; and (whether I believe that I have said) that the baptism of infants is not profitable, because it goeth before faith. Wherefore I, the said Michael Thombe, detesting and abhorring all and every such my said errors, heresies, and damned opinions, (willing) and with all my powers affecting hereafter firmly to believe in the true and perfect faith of Christ and of His holy Church, purposing to follow the true and sincere doctrine of His holy Church with a pure and free heart, voluntary mind, will, and intent, utterly do forsake, relinquish, renounce, and despise the said detestable errors, heresies, and abominable opinions, granting and confessing now that Christ took flesh of the Virgin Mary, and that the baptism of infants is profitable and necessary." The Archbishop, in his clemency, received the butcher's submission and prescribed the penance.

There is a curious entry in Strype's "Memorials of Cranmer." He says that the Protestants in other lands petitioned the King that he would agree to become their defender, and they would have an order of government in their Churches like that in England, and would become one. Upon this Rome sent two of her emissaries from Rotterdam into England,

who were to pretend themselves Anabaptists, and preach against baptising infants, and preach up rebaptising and a fifth monarchy upon earth. Besides this, one D. G. was authorised by these learned men to despatch a letter from Delft, in Holland, to two bishops, whereof Winchester was one, signifying the coming of these pretended Anabaptists and telling them that it was left to them to assist in this cause, and to some others whom they knew to be well affected to Mother Church. Strype adds, "Let it be remembered here and noted that about this time Winchester was appointed with Ridley, Bishop of Rochester, to examine certain Anabaptists in Kent." Does this explain some of the extravagances with which Baptists were charged?

CHAPTER II

THE STRUGGLES AND SUFFERINGS OF THE EARLY BAPTISTS

THE most un-English period of English history is that covered by the reign of the sweet sad-faced fanatic Queen Mary, who toiled hard to deserve the nickname of "Bloody Mary." The portrait of the real Mary is very difficult to discover among the pictures of the Queen. The place in a woman's heart reserved for the love of children Mary filled with passionate zeal for the Catholic Church. She put into practice the principles of her priestly counsellors with a fidelity that frightened them. The restoration of the Catholic Church was not the act of the people. Cardinal Pole received the kneeling Parliament, as representing the nation, back to the bosom of the Catholic Church. All Acts and provisions made against the see apostolic since the tenth year of King Henry VIII. were repealed, but a saving clause was added for "the establishment of all episcopal possessions and hereditaments conveyed to the laity." The parliamentary penitence was not deep enough to prompt the restoration of the property taken from the Church. The exiled clergy returned with great rejoicing. Cardinal Pole gave an address to the citizens of London in which he incited them to persecute the heretics. "Be ye assured," he said, "there is no kind of men so pernicious to the commonwealth as they be; there are no thieves, no murderers, no adulterers, nor no kind of treason, to be compared to theirs, who, as it were, undermine the chief foundation of the commonwealth, which is religion, maketh an entry to all kinds of vice in the most heinous manner." The bishops were instructed to "labour" to repress heresies and "haughty opinions,

unlawful books, ballads, and other pernicious and hurtful devices." "Schoolmasters, preachers, and teachers," who did not teach according to the royal opinions, might by the bishop and his said officers be punished and removed. The Anabaptists very soon were singled out for punishment. The bishops persecuted so thoroughly, that the nickname for a bishop was "Bite-sheep." However, it is not the bishops, but the Queen, who must be held responsible for the cruel penalties inflicted upon those who at the worst were guilty of speculative error.

All the towns conspicuous for persecution were on the old roads between London and the seaports, at which refugees would naturally arrive, and where the old Anabaptists had made converts to their teaching. London provided one hundred and twenty-eight martyrs; Canterbury, where the Anabaptists settled very early, gave fifty-five martyrs; Norwich gave forty-six. No other centre gave more than seven to the flames. "Master Foxe" gives a full account of them. Among the heroes worthy of remembrance is one Thomas Hawkes, who suffered at Coggeshall, a handsome young man, who had been in the service of the Earl of Oxford, and was well versed in the Scriptures. He had refused to have his little child baptised after the papistical manner. He was tried by Bonner, who kept him a prisoner in the Gatehouse for many terrible months before deciding upon his death. Some of his friends feared that he would prove unfaithful when he felt the flames. They promised to pray for him, and asked for a sign if he realised that Christ was with him in the torture. It was agreed that he should lift up his hands in token that he was at peace. On June 25th, 1555, Mr. Hawkes was bound to the stake. The sun shone brightly on the motley crowd that came to watch him die. The flames crept slowly round the good man's body, so slowly that the skin was parched and dried, but he flinched not. At a little distance a group of friends stood praying, and straining eager eyes for the victorious sign. Still he moved

not, but with set gaze endured. Presently the flames enveloped the entire body, and then slowly the hands were raised above his head, and Thomas Hawkes went to receive the crown. In Kent, traces of the old Baptists abound. They are indicated in accounts given by Master Foxe of the defence of the martyrs. Dr. Evans especially notes John Denby and John Newman, of Maidstone. Rob Smith was rudely examined by Bonner upon his faith in the efficacy of the baptism of children, but remained unshaken in his statement of the Anabaptist position, and sealed his fate by declaring "that to judge children damned that be not baptised is wicked." At his execution on August 8th at Uxbridge he was left a charred black mass supposed to be dead, but, to the consternation of the crowd, he rose, and lifting up the burnt stumps of his arms, endeavoured to sing praises to God before his spirit took its flight. Under King Henry's whip with six strings twenty-eight suffered; under Mary and her cardinal adviser two hundred and seventy-seven at least sealed their sincerity by their death. These "in public and open spaces were put into the fire ready to be burned, to the great horror of their offence and manifest example to other Christians." Five bishops, twenty-one clergy, eight gentlemen, eighty-four artisans, one hundred husbandmen and labourers, fifty-five women, and four children made up the number of martyrs. Amongst these the proto-Baptists were marked out for the greatest cruelty.

Mr. Beazley calls attention to the foreign or partly foreign blood or connections of many of the sufferers and the local distribution of the burnings, which were mainly in the eastern or south-eastern counties. These points deserve more attention because of their hidden meaning. "The old idea of the exceptional cruelty of the bishops in the capital and the home counties is yielding to the more natural and better-supported theory that the half-Socialist Anabaptists were most numerous in London, Kent, Essex, and East Anglia, and their activity compelled the attention of the bishops."

Ivimey quotes an account of David George, of Delft, in Holland, who, driven from his own country by persecution, died in London, and was honourably interred in St. Laurence's Church, but "three years after, when it was discovered that he was an Anabaptist, his disciples were sought after. A certain number of divines and lawyers were appointed to examine them." His opinions were condemned; his picture was carried through the streets and burnt; his corpse was taken up and burnt likewise (Crosby, vol. i., p. 63). There has been considerable question as to the teaching of David George. It is probable that he was a member of a foreign Baptist Church, which was formed in London in the former reign. George, whose proper name was Jovis, was connected with the party of Anabaptists who, after the grand assembly at Bockholt, divided into three sections: those who still clung to the governmental ideas for which they fought at Münster; those who found a leader in saintly Simon Menno; and the more communistic, who found a voice in David George, and in England were known as the "Family of Love." George had lived in Basle. There the mystic teaching still flourished among little groups. "The friends of God" had left as part of their priceless gifts to humanity the idea that men drawn by the Divine love were brothers knit by the closest ties, though bearing different names, and holding many contrary opinions. "The Family" was large. Many members were drawn together by Henry Nicholas in Amsterdam (1556). In England they flourished in Essex and Cambridge, where they "did very much increase, and united themselves into a kind of Church, with officers. And the chief elders of the lovely fraternity, some of them were weavers, some basket-makers, some musicians, some bottle-makers, and such-like, which by travelling from place to place did get their living." That they were numerous is shown by the attention they received from the authorities, who regarded them as very dangerous. In 1575 an apology was presented by them to the Parliament, wherein they give "a

brief rehearsal of the belief of the good willing in England which are named 'The Family of Love.'"

John Rogers calls them "an horrible set of gross and wicked heretics, in 1578 numbering as many as one thousand in England." That is probably a very low estimate, as the Privy Council took action to stop their progress, and framed special questions to be put to them, together with a proclamation that all suspected persons should be severely dealt with, and if any books were found upon them, they were to be imprisoned and their books burnt ("Documentary Annals," 392, 396).

Some Baptist writers have been very anxious to disown these practical mystics. It has been shown that they allowed some of their fraternity to go to Mass, though they "utterly detested all superstitious papistry." There is no reason to doubt that in 1604 some of their following presented a document to James I., in which "they utterly disclaim and detest all absurd and self-conceited opinions and disobedient and erroneous sorts of the Anabaptists, Brown, Penry, Puritans, and all other proud-minded sects of heresies." There is no difficulty in all this when it is remembered that their uniting bond was not a set of opinions, but the living of the life. There is no ground for believing the charges of impurity made against them; they were simply the usual charges brought against all who were outside the Church. They might have been the prototypes of some characters in Edward Bellamy's "Looking Backward." We need not be surprised at the exaggeration of their opponents when Sidney Webb tells us that even modern students have grown so accustomed to think of Socialism as a mere "Utopia," "spun from the humanity-intoxicated brains of various Frenchmen of the beginning of the century, that they find great difficulty in recognising it in any other aspect." Of course, their teaching was crude, and they made many blunders; but they bore witness to the spirituality of religion and the duty of the religious to care for others. They had a common purse, to which all able to

work had to contribute for the support of the community. If they lived now, we should call them "co-operative colonists," and describe their efforts as "economic experiments."

The accession of Elizabeth was hailed as a national deliverance. In common with all who repudiated salvation through the sacraments, the early Baptists gained by the restoration of Protestantism. The Queen was tolerant in matters in which she was indifferent. Her idea of the relation of the Church to the Crown is very well put by Jewell in his "Apology." "This is our doctrine: that every soul, what calling soever he be, be he monk, be he preacher, be he prophet, or be he apostle, is to be subject to kings and magistrates."

English industry gained largely by the coming of the aliens in 1561. The Dutchmen brought their religion as well as their arts and crafts. Amongst their neighbours were those whose admiration of their skill and sympathy for their suffering predisposed them to listen favourably to their teaching. The authorities very early took alarm, and in the fourth year of her reign the Queen issued a proclamation commanding "the Anabaptists and such-like heretics which had flocked to the coast towns of England from the parts beyond the sea under colour of shunning persecution, and had spread the poison of their sects in England, to depart the realm within twenty days, whether they were natural-born people of the land or foreigners, upon pain of imprisonment and loss of goods."

Collier says, "Several secured themselves with their Protestantism and joined the French and Dutch congregations both in London and the coast towns. The penal laws against Non-conformity were passed in quick succession. The Act of Supremacy became law in 1559. It gave to the Crown the jurisdiction over all spiritual courts and persons, and empowered the Queen by letters patent to give a commission to such as she thought fit to 'visit, reform, redress, order, correct, and amend all such errors and heresies, schisms, abuses, and offences which by any manner of spiritual jurisdiction can

be lawfully reformed, ordered, or amended.' ” From this grew the High Court Commission, with its questions so framed that Lord Burleigh declared that he found the articles so curiously penned that he thought “the Inquisition in Spain used not so many questions to trap their prey.”

The Prayer-book was revised, and imposed upon all congregations. The new settlement of religion, as shown in the Act of Uniformity, passed into law April 28th, 1559, by a majority of three in the House of Lords. It gave to the Crown the right of publishing such further ceremonies and rites as might be decided upon, and imposed a fine of one shilling for each case of absence from the Reformed Church services without reasonable excuses after June 24th.

The Conventicle Act of 1593 provided that all persons above sixteen years of age being present at unlawful conventicles should on conviction be committed to prison, there to remain without bail until they made open submission and declaration of conformity at the usual place of common prayer. The offender who refused to make such public submission within three months should be compelled “to abjure this realm of England and all the Queen’s Majesty’s dominions for ever.”

The battles of the bishops continued throughout Elizabeth’s reign. The Romanists so riddled the arguments for the validity of Archbishop Parker’s consecration that an Act of Parliament was passed “declaring the making and consecrating of the archbishops and bishops of this realm to be good, lawful, and perfect.” It is hardly to be expected that the authorities, who were sincerely anxious to stop the spread of witchcraft, would be sufficiently enlightened to see that the only solution of the religious difficulty was that of liberty to all and favour to none. The Elizabethan idea of a State Church was an establishment outside which no section of the people should be allowed to settle in peace. It was the sole exponent of the religion of England, provided, protected, and provisioned by the Queen and Parliament. The opposition

was strong. It came from two sources: the Separatists, the Brownists and Puritans, many of whom did not object to the establishment of a Church, but believed in the principle of a State religion. Their opposition was to the kind of Church proposed. Their idea of toleration was simply a matter of personal favour. The other source of opposition was of a different character. It came from the people who loved religion too well to agree that it should be staffed and drilled like the Court guards. The old Baptists, the communistic groups, and those who saw even in confused outline the ideal religious State as a kingdom of holy people living in obedience to the laws of Jesus, could not accept for this the substitution of a State religion which consisted of definite articles and indefinite practices.

The Anabaptists and their disciples were singled out for suppression. Easter Day, 1575, is one of the black dates in Elizabeth's reign. In Aldgate a company of Flemish Baptists were assembled to celebrate their Lord's death. How long they had been in the habit of meeting is unknown, nor is it at all certain that English people did not meet with them. We know that they did not number more than thirty. They were discovered and imprisoned. Grindal, Bishop of London, had himself suffered much from persecution and exile, but he had forgotten its bitterness when he examined the Baptists. The questions which were put and the answers were as follows:—"Whether Christ did not assume His flesh from the body of Mary. We replied that He is the Son of God. Whether infants should not be baptised. We cannot understand matters so, for we read nothing of it in the Scriptures. Whether it was lawful for a Christian to attend to or discharge the duties of a magistrate's officer. We replied that our conscience would not suffer us to do so, but we consider the magistracy as a minister of God for the protection of the servants of God. Whether a Christian was allowed to take an oath. We again replied our conscience would not even allow

us to do so, for Christ says, 'Let your communication be, Yea, yea, and Nay, nay.' We then kept silent."

The Bishop-bade them choose between recanting and the stake; they remained firm. On the Festival of Pentecost they were again examined. Five were sent back to prison, four or five recanted, and the rest were banished. Of the prisoners two died; and two others, Pieters and Terwoort, died for their faith at the stake.

Dr. Vedder gives a short confession of belief written by Hendrik Terwoort ("Short History of the Baptists," p. 130). Dr. Evans gives the substance of it in the form of a letter issued from prison. It contains a declaration in favour of full religious liberty. It reads, "Observe well the command of God, 'Thou shalt love the stranger as thyself.' Should he then who is in misery, and dwelling in a strange land, be driven thence with his companions, to their great damage? Of this Christ speaks, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.' Oh that they would deal with us according to natural reasonableness and evangelical truth, of which our persecutors so highly boast! For Christ and His disciples persecuted no one. On the contrary, Jesus thus taught: 'Love your enemies; bless them that curse you.' This doctrine Christ left behind with His Apostles, as they testify. Thus Paul, 'Unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place, and labour working with our own hands; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it.' From all this it is clear that all those who have the one true Gospel doctrine and faith will persecute no one, but will themselves be persecuted." This is the more noteworthy when it is remembered that there is not a confession of faith, nor a creed, framed by any of the reformers, which does not give to the magistrates a coercive power in religion, and almost everyone at the same time curses the resisting Baptist. (See "Tracts on Liberty of

Conscience," p. 81.) Foxe, the martyrologist, begged the Queen that the piles and flames of Smithfield, so long extinguished, might not be revived, but in vain.

The early Baptists had no idea of sacred buildings or consecrated ground. Their church was not a building, but a company of believers. They only used buildings for purposes of worship as a matter of convenience when they could not meet in the open fields or by the roadside. In out-of-the-way places, as Hill Cliff, near Warrington, and Eythorne, in Kent, the Anabaptists were able to use buildings regularly for worship, as they were almost inaccessible to those who had not been taught the way. The Church at Hill Cliff traces its history back to 1522. An old stone baptistry was discovered during some building operations in 1841, but its date is a matter of conjecture. In the graveyard adjoining the chapel are tombs belonging to the early part of the sixteenth century. Dr. Christian says that he deciphered one dated 1357, but that may have been 1557. The earliest deeds of the property were lost, but the extant deeds go back considerably over two hundred years, and describe the property as being "for the use of the people commonly called Anabaptists." Oliver Cromwell worshipped at the chapel whilst his army lay at Warrington, and one of his officers preached the sermon.

The Church at Eythorne probably owes its origin to refugees who sought safety among the strangers at Dover and scattered among the villages of the Kentish coast. In the calendar of State papers, there is an entry under the date of October 28th, 1522, as follows: "Northumberland to Sir William Cecil.—Wishes the King would appoint Mr. Knox to the bishopric of Rochester. He would be a whetstone to the Archbishop of Canterbury and a confounder of the Anabaptists lately sprung up in Kent." Our illustration shows the first Baptist chapel at Eythorne. Part of the building was a blacksmith's smithy, where John Knott the first plied his trade somewhere between 1590 and 1600, and described himself as "John Knott,

blacksmith by the grace of God." During four generations there was a John Knott ministering to the scattered flock about Eythorne. The last of the name removed to Chatham in 1780. Eythorne is even now a quiet village off the main road. The white chalk road, hedged with hazel, fades away in the distant view of waving grain and fields of green. It is undisturbed by the railway whistle. Its nearest station is Shepherdswell, by Dover. It is an ideal place for those who wish to worship in seclusion and secrecy. The story is still told of the wife of the first John Knott, who, while her husband preached the Gospel under the trees, would provide food for the soldiers who came from Canterbury to carry her beloved to the stocks for proclaiming the Gospel out of church. Many a Sunday morning when the military appeared she gave them refreshment and started them upon a wild goose chase, which they seemed to have been very ready to undertake. Upon another occasion Mr. Knott's furniture was confiscated and put up for sale. The respect for the old Passive Resister was so great that nobody could be induced to buy, and the goods remained unsold. It may be noted that as there were four generations of Knott in the pastorate, so there have been four generations of deacons bearing the name of Harvey. At the back of the old church Dr. Christian thought he discovered a brick baptistry. Much was made of the find, but it turns out that the historic baptistry which has done duty in American controversy was only built about sixty years ago, and, instead of being a baptistry, was a place for the mixing of manure, known as a "dung-mixer" in Kent. The early documents of the Church have not been kept, for the sufficient reason that they would have been incriminating evidence against the possessor. There is still, however, the local tradition, and Baptist Walk, along which the disciples came from Canterbury secretly to avoid the informers, still exists, and the John Knott apostolic suggestion is unquestioned. In 1900 a tablet was placed in the chapel to the memory of these brave men by one of their

descendants. Though the name of the donor is not given, she was known as the wife of Sir George Russell, whose good works have become a household word in Liverpool.

The Church at Bocking claims to have been one of the first to have a separate congregation from the Church of England. Bocking joins Braintree. By the latter name the Church is now known. It was formed by the effort of Anabaptists, who went from Kent into Essex, and began their worship there. Strype says: "A number of persons, a sort of Anabaptists, about sixty, met in a house on a Sunday in the parish of Bocking, in Essex, where arose among them a great dispute 'whether it was necessary to stand or kneel, bareheaded or covered, at prayers.' And they concluded the ceremony not to be material, but that the heart before God was required, and nothing else. Such-like warm disputes there were about Scripture. There were likewise such assemblies now in Kent. They were looked upon as dangerous to Church and State, and two of the company were therefore committed to the Marshalsea, and orders were sent to apprehend the rest" ("Memorials of Cranmer," vol. i., p. 337).

It was not the form of worship about which our fathers cared, but its spirit. One of the pastors of this Church, Mr. Middleton, earned the honour of martyrdom in the reign of Mary.

The Church at Stony Stratford dates its formation at 1625, though in the neighbourhood Baptists met for worship prior to that date. The following is from the old Church book:—"1625.—At that time there were a few Puritans living at Stratford, who united together to uphold the principles of the Gospel, in doing which they were often placed in circumstances of great difficulty, and sometimes even in imminent danger, in order to escape which they were obliged to meet sometimes in the neighbouring forest, at other times under the trees and hedges in the adjoining fields, or in private houses about Stony Stratford. It appears that so formidable was the opposition

raised against them at one time that they were pursued by a body of armed men, who followed them on the road to Newport Pagnell, but being met by Sir Henry —, who was secretly the friend of the Nonconformists, he succeeded in bringing their pursuers back to Stratford, and detained them by giving them ale till the persecuted little flock had effected their escape. They were, however, not always so successful, and some of them are said to have been sent to prison for their Nonconformity. After some time they were able to obtain a small piece of ground, and afterwards built a chapel, capable of holding about a hundred people, but such was the spirit of the times, they could not always hold their meetings in it. They do not appear to have had any settled ministry for a long time after they were formed into a congregation. The affairs of the Church were superintended by deacons, of whom, in consequence of the advanced age at which they were chosen, they had a very quick succession. Whenever deacons were to be ordained or set apart a day of fasting and prayer was appointed, and the abstinence of these days forms a striking contrast to the feasting and toast-drinking of other ordinations."

The beginning of the Baptists in Bristol is quaintly told in the Broadmead Records, wherein we read of a certain lady, Mrs. Hazzard, who, in order to make her protest against superstition, did open the door of her shop on Christmas Day, and with the sun full in her face, did sew in the sight of all men. Afterwards in the parish church "she troubled ye parson," and did openly "in ye presence of ye congregation in ye midst of his sermon when she heard him begin to bring in another innovation, viz., he began to assert that pictures and images might be used, when she heard that away she went forth before them all and said she would hear him noe more, nor never did to this day." Great issues hang upon insignificant causes. Five persons became troubled in their minds about the state of religion. Goodman Atkins, Goodman Cole,

Richard Moone, and Mr. Bacon, a young minister, with Mrs. Hazzard, at Mrs. Hazzard's house "at ye upper end of Broad Street in Bristol mett together and came to a holy Resolution to Separate from ye Worship of ye World and times they lived in." Thus having engaged themselves to the Lord and one another, they abstained from going to church during the time of common prayer, but often entered while the Psalm was being sung before the sermon. After a while there came to the city John Canne, a baptised man. When Mrs. Hazzard heard that he was in the town, she went to the Dolphin inn, and fetched him to her house, and entertained him all the time he was in the city. He was a man skilful in the Gospel. Like Aquila, he taught them the way of the Lord more perfectly, and settled them in church order. He preached at a place called Westerly, about seven miles from the city, and many went to hear him, with Mrs. Hazzard, willing to enjoy such a light as long as they could, where he had liberty to preach in "ye public place called ye church in ye morning."

The story of Mr. Canne's doings is a curious one. The reader is referred to the Broadmead Records. We quote but one other incident. Mr. Canne drew an abundance of people on to a green, and then sent for Mr. Fowler, "ye minister that lived there, to speak with him upon the Gospel." Mr. Fowler came, and a discussion began. Mr. Canne showed that there were many corruptions in public worship, and that it was the duty of the people to reform them. To this the clergyman seems to have agreed, but he thought, as things stood, it was not the right time, because they would not be suffered. Mr. Canne replied "that they should hire a barn to meet in keeping ye worship and commands of ye Lord as they were delivered to us," and "thus Mr. Canne continued nearly two hours in ye green asserting and proving ye duty of the people to ye Lord in such a day, after which they took leave of each other, and departed, but the business of preaching in ye barn could

hardly be received. Ye thing of relative holiness and tincture of consecrated places was not off ye people, for they were not as yet prepared, having been soe long nursed up in ignorance and outward forms." Separate meetings were held, and from them grew most of the Baptist Churches in the Bristol district. Of Broadmead we shall hear again. Its history deserves separate treatment.

In Kent a zealous minister of the Baptist persuasion, Thomas Brewer, in 1626, was arrested in his work by the military. Brook gives us this bit of information concerning him: "The first account of him we meet with is that in the year 1626 he was a preacher among the separatists in and about Ashford, in Kent. In that year, through the instigation of Laud, he was persecuted and censured in the High Commission Court, and committed to prison, where he remained no less than fourteen years." The Archbishop, speaking of the mischief done by the Nonconformity of Mr. Brewer and Mr. Turner, says, "The hurt which they have done is so deeply rooted that it is impossible to be plucked up on a sudden. I must crave time to work it off little by little." In his account of his province given to the King in 1638, he says, "I must give your Majesty to understand that in and about Ashford, in Kent, the separatists continue to hold their conventicles, notwithstanding the excommunication of so many of them as have been disclosed. Two or three of their principal ringleaders, Brewer, Fenner, and Turner, have been long kept in prison; and it was once thought fit to proceed against them by the Statute of Abjuration. Not long since Brewer slipped out of prison and went to Rochester and other parts of Kent and held conventicles, and a great many people were put into great dis-temper about the Church. He is taken again, and was called before the High Commissioner, when he stood silent, but in such a jeering, scornful manner as I scarcely ever saw the like, so in prison he still remains." It was not until 1640 that Brewer was liberated from gaol by order of the House of Commons.

The suffering of our people in the early days was terrible. The ministers received but little help from the congregations. They were too poor to give, and the authorities made it almost impossible for them to earn their own living. They were as hunted beasts of prey : they were watched, seized, and treated as felons. It was with danger that they met even in their own houses, and the woods and the hills were denied them as places of worship. Wherever they went their steps were dogged by informers ; their only refuge was God and the grave.



MENNO SIMONS.

CHAPTER III

THE CONTINENTAL ANABAPTISTS

A GLANCE at the Continental Anabaptists will help us the better to understand their English kinsmen. Mr. Richard Heath says Anabaptism was "the voice that proclaimed liberty of conscience, that declared the common life to be of far higher importance than the individual life, the true community to be the Divine unit rather than the individual, the family, or the nation." It has often been charged against the Anabaptists that they were Socialists. There is no doubt that they taught that the law of Christ covered the whole of life, and that no man was justified in living simply to acquire wealth. They believed that the Divine Spirit was the Guide of each believer, and the Bible a text-book in spiritual education. They taught that inspiration did not cease with the writing of the Scriptures, but was the privilege and possession of all who lived an obedient life. Their people were taught personally to labour for their own support. Their great effort was to found a kingdom of God on the earth in their own time.

They appear in different lands : in Switzerland, in the Tyrol and Moravia, in Germany, in the Netherlands, in England and America. Their history is one long period of persecution. All the authorities seem to have attempted their extinction, but were unsuccessful. Buckle says that by 1546 thirty thousand persons had been put to death for Anabaptism in Holland and Friesland alone. The Netherlands, in the sixteenth century, were the centre of the storm that raged over the greater part of Europe so pitilessly upon these people. The fierceness of the persecution may be attributed to the fact that the movement was not simply a reformation of religion, but aimed at the political regeneration

of the people. Historians like Mr. R. Barclay affirm the antiquity of the teaching: "The rise of the Anabaptists took place long prior to the formation of the Church of England, and there are also reasons for believing that on the continent of Europe small hidden Christian societies who have held many of the opinions of the Anabaptists have existed from the times of the Apostles. In the sense of the direct transmission of Divine truth and the true nature of spiritual religion, it seems probable that these Churches have a lineage or succession more ancient than that of the Roman Church." Some of their leaders, like Menno, stoutly deny that they are a sect, insisting that they are nothing more than disciples of the Lord, acknowledging allegiance to His teaching alone. Many of them were mystics who sank their individuality in the life of the Cause, just as the Friends of God, under the teaching of Henry Suso and Father Tauler, regarded their individuality as absorbed in the Divine. There is but a thin line of demarcation between some forms of the highest spiritual ecstasy and stupid frenzy, as genius and insanity are not far apart. Münzer, whose career closed in pathetic tragedy, said on the day of his death, "Our cause is like a grain of wheat, which, when it is cast into the earth, men turn away from as if it would never rise again." Then identifying himself with the Cause, he exclaimed, "I am as yet but in the bud. Have patience, I shall ripen, and the ear will bear both grains and spikelets. The just will gather the fruit, but the spikelets will prick the impious and the tyrants to remote ages." Who can say that his words were not prophetic? Earlier he said, "Nature is dead in me. I am nothing but a principle." He was a leader in the movement for the freeing of the people from social serfdom which in 1524 spread rapidly through the Black Forest and on to the borders of Switzerland, and further to Constance. Indeed, it seemed that it would carry all before it. It sought to establish from the Scriptures a commune, in which there should be the recognition of freedom for every man and

impartial justice for the weakest. The game laws were to be abolished; woods and forests taken possession of by any means other than fair purchase were to be returned to their original owners—the people. Each commune was to have the right to choose its own pastor. He was to be supported by a tithe on corn. Lands too highly rented were to be submitted to arbitration. No service was to be demanded beyond that which was mutually agreed, and if any of these things were proved contrary to the Scriptures, they were to be renounced. It was a crude charter they drew up, but it contained principles for which reformers are still contending. Its advocates were the poorer parish priests; its leaders belonged to no class but to the people. The peasants were enthusiastic, the authorities inflexible. Luther, the brave-hearted sympathiser with the people, became a prey to the same fear that struck panic among the princes. He wrote to Br. Rühel, "They proceed with the poor people in so horrifying a manner, it is truly pitiable, but what can one do? It is necessary, and God also wills, to have the people brought into fear and awe." At the end of the spring of 1525 the people rose in their strength, and as a whirlwind of destruction swept through the country. Their leaders came from the outside; they were nothing but agitators seeking their own gain, fit representatives of the type of professional, pliable labour-leaders whose presence has resulted in the crucifixion of the cause they never really represented. One of them was Götz, of Berlichingen, another the bankrupt Duke Ulrich of Wurtemberg. Among the peasants were the united forces of Hesse, Saxony, and Brunswick. They met at Frankenhausen on May 15th. It was little more than a massacre. Six thousand peasants were slain; three hundred persons known to have taken part in the movement were beheaded. In that year the Peasants' Crusade received its baptism of blood and of fire, and Anabaptism, perhaps more as a spirit of revolt against tyrannical authority in Church and State than as a system of theology, came into prominence.

While the movement seemed in its dying struggles in Germany, it sprang up with all the energy of youth in Switzerland. In Zurich the influence of Zwingli was supreme. His position as cathedral preacher, his magnificent oratory, and many talents made him a ruler among men. Many reformers were attracted by his teaching. In 1523 a great conference was held in the city. Everybody of importance seems to have been there: nobles, university doctors, and prelates. Zwingli propounded his doctrines and held the field against all adversaries in this theological tournament. He was acclaimed the victor, and Zurich formally adopted his views. With his official leadership his chief difficulties began. Responsibility begets restraint. With the popular movement for Church reform there was intertwined the aspiration for civic regeneration. The great theologian had no faith in the people; he feared a free Church, and sought to make the city council the authority over the Church. The friends of freedom separated from him, and organised communities of believers, who tried to live their lives after the New Testament fashion. The chief leaders, Felix Manz and Conrad Grebel, were men of considerable position and learning. They arrived at the conclusion that the Church could be composed only of believers. With a little company of working men they met together in the home of Felix Manz for the study of the Scriptures. As one of them said, "under the Cross their hearts were made one." They determined to form a new brotherhood of believers. In the attempt were united the common people, who tilled the ground for a living, and students whose knowledge of Greek and Hebrew and philosophy was equal to that of the foremost followers of Zwingli. Grebel was socially superior to the great reformer, who described him as "most studious, most candid, most learned." He was a graduate of the universities of Vienna and Paris. Manz was known as a scholar of considerable attainments in Hebrew Scripture. With them was Jacob Blaurock, who had been a monk, but

had put off the cowl when he became a Christian. He was described as a "second Paul." By them the apostolic commune was restored. They insisted that the New Testament knew nothing of usury, tithes, and livings, nothing of offices of authority in the world held by pastors of the Church, nothing of war as legitimate for Christians. Their only weapon was suffering, their means of reforming those who had gone astray brotherly admonition, and as a last resort excommunication. They entered into friendly relationship with those in Holland who were seeking the same ends. It is clear that they rejected the popular teaching concerning the sacraments. Their influence rapidly increased until complaint was made in the council that the districts were becoming seditious, refusing the tithes and compulsory services. A resolution was passed calling for a conference on January 17th, 1525. The test question was the validity of infant baptism. The new brotherhood had reached the conclusion that baptism was the declaration of the disciple's faith in the Lordship of Jesus. They determined to go to the conference in confidence that they possessed the truth, resolved, if necessary, to tread the old path of sorrow and suffering along which their Master went. This was their prayer: "O God, grant us intrepid prophets who, without any additions invented by themselves, shall preach Thine own eternal word." In the conference they had the strongest case, but Zwingli had the council at his back. He declared that circumcision was now represented by infant baptism, and was the seal of admission into the new covenant. The council, made up of politicians not necessarily Christian in any sense, decided, as everybody knew they would, in favour of their chief. It was made law that, after eight days, anyone neglecting to baptise his children should be banished from the State, as, "each one of the Anabaptists having expressed his views without hindrance, it was found by the sure testimonies of Holy Scripture, both of the Old and New Testaments, that

Zwingli and his followers had overcome the Anabaptists, annihilated Anabaptism, and established infant baptism." Grebel had practised adult baptism. The ancient chronicles of the Anabaptists record that their people resolved to be nigh one another in their time of anguish. "In their hearts they were pressed; therefore have they begun to bend their knees before the highest God in heaven, and as one heart in experience, crying out in prayer that He would give them to do His Divine will, and to this end would show them His compassion. Then Blaurock stood up, and, in accordance with the will of God, begged Grebel that he would baptise him with a true Christian baptism on his faith and confession. Kneeling down, Grebel, in accordance with his prayer, baptised him, no ordained minister at this time having undertaken such work. When this had taken place, the others likewise desired of Blaurock that he would baptise them, which he also has done and in deep fear of God. They have also altogether given themselves to the Lord, one among the converted being appointed as minister of the Gospel; and so they commenced to teach and maintain the faith." It is the story of another night of crises, surrender, and waiting, like unto that of an earlier date when the disciples met together in an upper room and, after receiving that strange touch of power, went out with a new strength not their own. Again the Church was born, and the Divine Spirit clothed Himself with men to accomplish His will. After this rediscovery of the meaning of baptism the little company, realising a sense of union, refused to call anything they possessed their own property. They established a community of goods. They came together at evening time and re-instituted the observance of the Lord's Supper as a commemorative feast. The council took strong measures to put down the reformers. Grebel, Blaurock, and Manz were brought before the authorities, with twenty-one persons who agreed with them. Before their trial they urged their followers that those who did not feel strong enough to

remain faithful should under protest do the bidding of the authorities, but that the stronger should suffer. They were committed to prison. One night it was noticed that the shutter in the window was unfastened. By means of rope they could reach the ground, and a swing bridge would enable them, under cover of the darkness, to escape. This they decided to do, but the question arose, "Where shall we flee?" One of them suggested they should go to the Red Indians in North America. In the morning the prison was found, like another prison to which it is said an angel came, with its cell empty, and there arose the legend that Grebel and his followers had been delivered by an angel and had disappeared. Persecution increased, and with it there deepened a sullen spirit of revenge in the masses of the people, whose attitude to Grebel was only that of mild admiration, but whose love of justice was intense. Driven out of Zurich, the movement found a home in St. Gall. Its meetings were conducted in private houses and rooms of trade guilds, the hall of the Butchers' Guild being a favourite meeting-place. From this we may see how closely the Anabaptists were associated with labour. Bible-readings were first given in 1523 by Dr. Hubmaier. It was the custom, at the close of the reading, to ask for questions from the audience. Usually there was discussion. This was the opportunity of the Anabaptists, and they used it well. In the Tailors' Hall and the Hall of the Weavers their meetings were held until Grebel was forbidden the city. On March 2nd, 1526, the Zurich Council, driven to extremes, decreed that whosoever rebaptised should be drowned. Felix Manz was re-arrested, and on January 5th was sentenced to death by drowning. On the day the sentence was to be carried out his mother came to him and, with loving entreaty, begged him to be steadfast to the will of God. He was bound upon a hurdle and thrown into the stream, after he had cried with a loud voice, "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit."

For a moment the calm blue surface was disturbed, and then it closed again in peace, having taken to its bosom the body of a brave soul. Grebel, by sudden death, was spared a like fate. Blaurock was burned at the stake at Clausen, in the Tyrol, in 1529. Other leaders suffered a like fate, and Zwingli consented thereto. All the while the masses were watching and drawing nearer to the terrible day, October 10th, 1531, when Zurich learned with dismay that the peasants had united with the Catholics, the army was defeated, Zwingli slain, and the city in the hands of the Catholics; and so the tide was turned, and Catholic restoration commenced in Switzerland.

William Reublin went to Waldshut in 1525. The people were responsive to the Anabaptists' doctrine. At Easter Hubmaier and one hundred and ten others were baptised upon their profession of faith. The authorities, already frightened by what had taken place, issued orders of banishment, and many of the people fled to Moravia, as the Waldenses had done earlier. The informer was busy tracking the leaders from place to place, and describing them so minutely to the authorities that they could not move without danger. Moravia was their haven of refuge between 1526 and 1536. They numbered seventy thousand persons. They had common households in eighty-six places where they lived together as brothers under the leadership of Huther and others, who strove to preserve Christian communism. It is difficult to say how far they acted in union. Each community supported itself and made its own rules. There was a common table and allotted toil for all. The superintendent was called the householder. There was a common bakehouse, which accounts for so many of their meeting-places being called "bakehouses." The children went to one school. There was a common nursery cared for by mothers, and a common kitchen tended by daughters. To others was committed the care of the sick. Each family had private rooms, and mixed marriages were not

allowed. They cared for their aged and infirm, but strictly enforced the rule that those who would not work should not eat. They provided no meals for lazy saints. In the morning they knelt in silent prayer; they after breakfast went to the fields or the workshop. Their wages went into a common purse. They grew in wealth, owning land and houses and machinery. No vice was permitted among them. Offenders were rebuked at the Lord's Table, and if they did not mend their ways they were turned adrift.

The teaching which produced this "Utopia" was very apt to go into extremes and fanaticisms, especially under the pressure of persecution. This is what happened at Münster, where in 1534 the leaders, following the common instinct of over-oppressed people, rose in rebellion. The Bishop ordered the imprisonment or extradition of all Anabaptists. There were riots, and finally the people overthrew all authority and established a "kingdom." Nearly all we know of that reign of fanaticism comes from tainted sources. Justice has yet to be done to the memory of that strangely mixed character called the Prophet of Münster. We offer no excuse for the shedding of blood, but we do put in a plea that the whole circumstances should be considered, and that it is possible that Jan van Leiden may have been subject to fits of craziness, and perhaps was a better man than his enemies represented. The people had long been tyrant-ridden and priest-ridden, their patience exhausted by persecution, and hardly able to call their souls their own. They heard the new gospel told in "the dulcet sounds of fantasy." They took a short cut to the millennium. Like Samson, they pulled down the temple in their blindness and misery, destroying their enemies and themselves. Demos is ever the worst despot, and it may have been so at Münster. It was a tragic failure to regenerate by physical force.

We now turn to the mystic school of Anabaptists, men who owed their teaching rather to Father Tauler and Thomas à Kempis than to political reformers. Many of these found their

home in the congenial surroundings of Strasburg, where the sentiment and the tradition of Tauler and the Friends of God still lingered as sweet fragrance in the air. Many were the stories told of the Friend of God who came to the cathedral preacher and showed the great man that his life was selfish, and therefore sinful. It would still be common talk that Dr. Tauler retired from public life to find in silence the strength which afterwards enabled him to suffer and serve. At Basle, where "Nicolas" was still a name to conjure up memories of one who, in the midst of a worldly life, was seized with a desire to know God and to find that righteousness which is not of ourselves, that leads to the life of peace, it would still be told how Nicolas spent the night in an agony of prayer before the crucifix, and ere the dawn had broken the figure before which he prayed, and had found "the inner light" which enabled him to read the will of God. These traditions were formative forces in the mystic school of Anabaptists. There is yet room for a study of the sweet, strong spirits who were the salt that saved the Anabaptist movement from corruption and decay. Among these the names of Hans Denck and Menno Simons occupy the foremost place.

Hans Denck reminds one of Myers' poem of St. Paul. He was a young man when he reached the zenith of his influence. His birth, probably at the close of the fifteenth century, is unrecorded. He passes along the road of history a lonely man, without father, mother, wife, or child. There is no information concerning his ancestry; he is a Melchizedek. He appears at Basle, where he took his M.A. degree, and became reader in a printer's establishment, afterwards schoolmaster in Nuremberg, where his high morality compelled him to oppose the laxity of life permitted by the Lutheran authorities. His attempts at reform resulted in a sudden order of banishment from the city. At this time he knew not the life. He wrote concerning the faith of others: "I, too, would fain possess that faith which works salvation and leads to life, but I do not find it in me.

Nay, if I said to-day that I had that faith, to-morrow I should accuse myself of lying; for an inner voice, a spark of truth which I partly feel in me, tells me that I have not yet in me the faith that works life." In that "inner voice" there is already the prophecy of his future teaching. In 1524 we find Denck settled with the Swiss Anabaptists at St. Gall. He is a friend of the leaders of the movement, but not a disciple. The ceremonial side of religion has no charm for him. He seems to have been a student working hard in the pursuit of knowledge. His enemies describe him as learned in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. From the fragments of the historic canvas we may piece together his portrait: tall and slim, with the dignity of a scholar in his demeanour, pale cheeks and lustrous eyes, with that strange glint that tells of smouldering energy, capable of reckless bravery—a dreamer who when awake would fight hard to make his dreams come true. The fact of his being at the Anabaptist centre after his dispute with the clerical authorities of Nuremberg made him a marked man when he went to Augsburg. There he found not only the college in which he was to teach, but the city itself, as lax in morality as it was orthodox in doctrine. He started a modest little society, a sort of social purity crusade, which he called "enlisting in an embassy for God." While engaged in this work he met Balthasar Hubmaier, a man of sterner stuff. We have seen him at Waldshut, a town on the Rhine, holding Bible readings; now he has left the priesthood and is confessed a leader of the Anabaptists. The Austrian Government had tried to arrest him, but he fled to Schaffhausen, where the magistrates gave him protection. His followers in Waldshut were saved by the appearance of bands of peasants who had risen against the authorities. The Government was too busy to persecute. Hubmaier was allowed to return; the town gave him welcome as the members of a family greet their father. His meeting with Denck was the beginning of an attempt to form an apostolic brotherhood. It grew quickly.

Eleven hundred persons were received by baptism upon their confession of faith. In this Denck found his life-work. His influence became paramount. He developed an eloquence that swayed multitudes. In 1527 he was president of a great synod of Anabaptists. By some he was described as the Pope of the Baptists. Bader calls him the "famous Hans Denck." With the energy of an apostle, he went from city to city, proclaiming the evangel and evolving more and more an other-world conception of morality and religion. He feared that his friends were becoming simply an organisation for obtaining social justice. To him politics was a path, not a goal. He looked beyond civic reform to the better life Christians should live. While his power increased with the people, the gulf between himself and the leaders widened. History has preserved for us scarcely more than the subjects of his books. There are several confessions; a treatise on the sources and foundations of religious knowledge; others on the Divine constitution of the universe, true love, and justification and free-will. Denck was an influence that passed into other lives, and shapes religious thought in our own land to-day. To the teaching of Tauler he added the strenuous endeavour after social righteousness. Where he died, or the place of his burial, no man knows. A gleam of light seen for a moment, then lost in the darkness, having answered its purpose in revealing the scenery and imparting some strength and beauty, is not lost. So Hans Denck came and went and yet abides. To him we may trace some of the best of Tolstoy's teaching and the Society of Friends' passion for social amelioration and individual freedom.

In a humble village home at Witmarsum, Menno Simons was born in 1492. It was a time of agitation among the peasants. The taxes pressed heavily upon those least able to pay. The brave hearts who complained were silenced in death. The religious leaders for the most part were looking for a new kingdom. The mother of Menno Simons had a great desire

that this son should become a priest in the Romish Church. He was ordained in 1516. He seems to have been a zealous worker and an earnest inquirer. The popular teaching concerning sacraments unsettled him. He sought conference with Luther and Bullinger, but in vain did he try to discover the Scripture foundation for their teaching, until at last, he tells us, the illumination of the Holy Spirit came to him through reading and meditation upon the Scriptures. Then he began to teach the true doctrine of repentance and life from the Romish pulpit. The events in the village must have affected the congregation and the priest. News came from Münster that poor Jan van Leiden's wife was drowned with fourteen others, her only crime being that she was the wife of one who had done wrong. A number of fugitives had escaped from the military persecution, they were being pursued, and late one night it was whispered through the village that at Oldeklooster they were hiding. The place was near to Menno Simons' dwelling. His brother lived there. The strangers numbered three hundred, men, women, and children. The mothers, with their little ones, hid themselves away; the men looked to possibilities of defence. The villagers round had compassion upon the poor people, and helped them. Soon the tramp of armed men told of the approach of the soldiers. The Anabaptist men, aided by many peasants, made a brave defence. They held out for several days. The village was taken, but only when the men were slain. Among those who fell was the brother of the neighbouring parish priest, Menno Simons. The authorities, having gained what they called a victory, executed the rest of the men they could find, and down the river the bodies of many women drifted to tell of the cruelty of the officers. A year later Abbé Philips, from the Mennonite Church at Strasburg, came to preach in that Frisian village. Among his hearers was the priest, who became a convert and afterwards a great leader. He left the Romish Church in January, 1536, about a year after his brother had

been slain fighting in the Anabaptist ranks. Menno Simons, from the beginning of his new career, had no fellowship with those who advocated physical force. His declaration is found in the "Beautiful and Fundamental Doctrine of the Word of God," calling upon all who are Christians to live the higher life, which begins in the new birth at conversion, and is only proved by the fruits of the Spirit and the Christian virtues, as shown in the example of our Lord. "These regenerate persons constitute the true Christian Church, who worship Christ as their only and true King, who fight not with swords and carnal weapons, but only with spiritual, the word of God and the Holy Spirit. They seek no kingdom but that of grace; they conduct themselves as citizens of heaven. Their doctrine is the word of the Lord, and everything not taught therein they reject." "They have no justification than that which is by faith of Christ; they meet together for the sacred Supper which is a commemoration of the death and benefits of Christ; and they withdraw from perverse apostates, according to the word of God." Though his followers were called Mennonites, and there was an advantage in the use of the name, as it freed them from the stigma the authorities had set upon Anabaptists, yet he insisted that they were neither a denomination nor a sect. In August, 1536, there was a great meeting at Buckholt, in Westphalia. The followers of Münzer, Stork, and Stubner, weary of waiting for the golden age of freedom to dawn, advocated resort to arms. Menno, amid much opposition, insisted upon the old doctrine that no Christian could wage war or avenge himself upon his adversaries, and that magistrates should be obeyed in all their commands that were not opposed to the word of the Lord. The discussions were loud and long, and ended in a cleavage in the Anabaptist ranks. On the one side were the men of action, impatient in the presence of wrong; on the other were the mystics who saw that the freedom of the spirit is obtained through suffering, and that the truest conquest comes to those who endure. The

Mennonites received the support of the saints; the soldiers left them. One of the earliest ministers in their community was Dirck Philips, who taught the uselessness of all sacraments and ceremonies to make Christians. The Church order adopted seems to have been an improvement upon that used by the Swiss disciples. It was very insistent "that the words and works of the members of a Church should agree." In their assemblies they recognised an equality of believers; there was no human head of the Church. Their teachers were not salaried officials; they worked for their own living; they rejected "as false prophets" all who served for pay. In their meetings they sat in silent prayer after a portion of Scripture had been read; then would follow testimony or experience by brethren who had it laid upon their hearts to speak. They introduced the singing of hymns other than the Psalms of David. This was a great offence to those who declared that there should be nothing "man-made" in their forms of worship. There was liberty of prophesying for all in the congregation; they had no confessions of faith, believing that no disciple should be under bondage to "man-made" creeds. Their statements of belief were issued to avoid misrepresentation and to guide any who desired to know what they taught. They continued the curious ceremony of washing the saints' feet as a sign of voluntary subjection the one to the other. They were the first to introduce the practice of ministers praying aloud in the congregation. Part of their worship was the distributing of alms to the poorer brethren. To their credit, it may be said that they cared for their own; their most enduring monuments are their charities. Orphan-house and hospital still remain to indicate the kind of service they thought most acceptable to God. The Empress Catherine II. invited a section of Menno's followers to Russia, where they settled and founded agricultural communities, especially in the Crimea. Their peaceful spirit secured them exceptional favour. Their men were exempted by the authorities

from military service because of their teaching that no Christian should engage in war. That exemption lasted until 1871, when it was withdrawn. Who can tell how far the teaching of Menno prepared the way for Count Tolstoy?

At Rynsburg in 1619 four brothers Van der Kodde differed with the rest of the community, and formed a new body. The chief of them was William, who left behind learned works which show that he was a man of very considerable attainments. His name as an author is remembered as Gulielmus Coddæus. Their differences seem to have been twofold: they insisted upon immersion as the only valid form of baptism, and that the office of teacher had ceased in the Church. They were called the Sect of the Prophets. In 1743 we find them described as Quakers by the common people. Their strictness of life is evidenced by the fact that they were sorely concerned over the "button controversy," which had rent other little communities of very sober-minded people. The traditional fashion of fastening the garments of men and women was by hooks and eyes, still used for some vestments. The Quakers were concerned to observe in their assembly some younger sisters whose frocks were fastened with buttons that shone. The offending buttons had just been introduced. Perhaps their offence was their newness. Anyhow the "fathers" regarded them as the badge of a carnal mind, the "mark of the beast." Church meetings were held to decide whether buttons should be permitted. The assembly disagreed, and controversy arose. The innovators were called the "button party"; the old-fashioned were described as the "hook-and-eye party." For generations the differences created remained unhealed. Perhaps the button was the occasion rather than the cause of the severance. We may smile at the severity that saw an offence in a coat button, but we must admire the strength of character that prompted the attempt to maintain simplicity of dress.

The historic connection between English Baptists and

Anabaptists has often been denied. Mr. Skeats says, "The Dutch Anabaptists of this period" (1572) "had little in common with English Baptists, excepting an objection to infant baptism." Mr. Skeats quotes Dr. Somers (Some?) to prove that in 1589 there were several Baptist communities in England. Anabaptists and Baptists must be very close akin, for the "Godly Treatise" relied upon by Mr. Skeats to identify Baptists was written to describe Anabaptists. The errors charged against these people were—"that the ministers of the Gospel ought to be maintained by the voluntary contribution of the people; that the civil power has no right to make and impose ecclesiastical laws; that people ought to have the right of choosing their own ministers; that the High Commission Court is an anti-Christian usurpation; that those who are qualified to preach ought not to be hindered by the civil power," etc.

It will be seen that the General Baptists, beside being in substantial theological agreement with Anabaptists, adopted their forms. They had the rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper, lovefeasts, and some practised the ceremony of washing the disciples' feet. This last is referred to in the following entry in an authentic record of a body of baptised believers meeting at Tunbridge Wells: "November, 1741.—Agreed to be in ye practice of washing of feet before June next." In the same book there is this note: "Agreed to wash feet at this place on Fryday, ye 6th June next, and yt Bro. Harrison give us a sermon on occasion, and Bros. Ashford and Chaptman to provide dinner and beer." Where Anabaptists settled in our country Baptist Churches afterwards were found. The relation seems to be as that of the Howards and Stanleys to the historic families whose name they bear.

A history of the Anabaptists of High and Low Germany was written in 1642, and is among the King's Pamphlets. Its author says, "All these are scions of that flock of anabaptism that was transplanted out of Holland, in the year 1535, when

two ships laden with Anabaptists fled into England. . . . Here, it seemeth, they have remained ever since." In 1536 Barkley reports that Anabaptist societies in England sent a delegation to a great gathering of their brethren in Westphalia. It appears, therefore, that English Baptists as a distinct community had their origin among the refugees from the Netherlands.

CHAPTER IV

THE STORY OF JOHN SMYTH AND THE GENERAL BAPTISTS

1603 to 1646

THERE is no name in Baptist history so productive of controversy as that of the Rev. John Smyth, the father of the General Baptists. In order to get a clear idea of his figure we must see it in perspective.

John Greenwood and Henry Barrow in 1586 were students at Cambridge. They joined the Separatists. Greenwood was imprisoned in the Clink for reading the Scriptures to twenty-one persons at the house of a friend. Barrow was a frequenter of the Court, and of dissipated habits. On a fateful Sunday he heard a Puritan loudly reprove sin and point the way of salvation. Barrow became a changed man. He sought his college friend Greenwood in prison, and was without warrant imprisoned by Archbishop Whitgift. During six years they wrote expositions which were secretly conveyed from the prison to Holland to be printed, and sent back to be circulated all over the cities and towns of England.

In Zealand Francis Johnstone was preacher to the English of the Staple at Middelburg. He was zealous, and had a considerable maintenance. To him was committed the task of intercepting the Puritan writings. He discovered the "Refutation of Gifford," and obtained the magistrates' authority to burn the entire issue. Happily he preserved two copies, one for himself, another to give to a special friend. He read this pamphlet curiously until he was "so taken, and his conscience so troubled, that he could have no rest in himself until he crossed the seas, and came to London to confer

with the authors, who were in prison and shortly after executed." He joined the Separatists in London, and returned to Amsterdam to reprint at his own cost and risk the books he had burned.

In 1595 a company of believers were surprised at Islington, and committed to prison. Among them were John Penry and Francis Johnstone.

A zealous Puritan minister in Kent, Henry Jacob, entered upon discussion with Johnstone, the result being that Henry Jacob became a convert, and the Separatist Church in Old Southwark came into existence. Its ministry consisted of a staff of poor preachers who travelled the country. Some of them went into Lincolnshire, where the godly parson, John Smyth, held a disputation with them upon conformity to the ceremonies of the Church. Barkley describes him as a man of repute, Master of Arts, Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, and vicar of Gainsborough, who became a Separatist and one of the preachers in connection with Henry Jacob. He spent some time as a prisoner in the Marshalsea, and was liberated, probably because he had been "sick nigh unto death."

In the MSS. of the Lincoln Corporation a document was quite recently found by Mr. Pike in which it is recorded that on September 27th, 1600, Mr. John Smyth was elected preacher of the city by eight voices over Mr. Luddington, who had seven. The Corporation agreed that Mr. Smyth's salary should be fixed at £40, to be paid quarterly. He was also to have a grant of £3 6s. 8d. per annum for house rent, and permission to keep three kine upon the commons. Two years later the Corporation further decided that "a grant be engrossed and sealed assuring for life the stipend heretofore paid to Mr. John Smyth, the preacher long since elected."

A few months after this mark of approval of their preacher the Corporation became greatly agitated over Mr. Smyth's doctrines, and perhaps not the less because he denounced wrong-doing in high places. The council on October 13th

"repealed and revoked" their acts relating to Mr. Smyth's salary, and dismissed him, appointing Mr. Luddington in his stead. They said "John Smyth hath approved himself a factious man in city by personal preaching, and that untruely, against divers men of good place." They also added, "He is not licensed to preach, and is at the present inhibited by the L. Bishop of this diocese from the execution of his ministry and preaching." The city fathers two months later seemed to begin to fear the consequences of their strong action. The minutes of the council for December 13th show this: "Whereas there is likely to grow many suits prosecuted by the late preacher of this city, John Smyth, against the Mayor, etc., concerning one yearly annuity (*sic*) which he pretendeth to be granted to him, and whereas also there are certain articles exhibited unto the L. Bishop of this diocese against him in the names of John Becke, now mayor, and Leo Hollingworth, with the consent of the council, for his erroneous doctrine and undue teaching of matters of religion, and personal preaching at men in this city, all such sums of money as shall be disbursed about the defence of such suits and the prosecuting of the said articles shall be repaid to the Mayor out of the revenues of the Corporation." The end of the dispute does not appear, but it is clear that Mr. Smyth could not have been the vicar of Gainsborough between 1600 and 1602, especially as we now know that John Jackson was vicar from 1566 till 1601 and was followed by Jerome Phillips, who held the office to 1608.

Professor Arber credits John Smyth with founding the Separatist Church at Gainsborough in 1602. This has been the generally accepted opinion, but Governor Bradford, writing of the Churches at Gainsborough and Scrooby, says: "In one of these Churches (besides others of note) was Mr. John Smyth, a man of able gifts and a good preacher, who afterwards was chosen pastor." It is hardly likely that Bradford would have spoken of him in that way if he had known him to be the

founder of these communities. A work entitled "A Pattern of True Prayer," by John Smyth, Minister and Preacher of the Word of God," was entered at Stationers' Hall "22 Martii, 1605." A copy of the first edition has recently come to light. In the Preface there is a statement of great importance, as it shows that at that time Smyth was not a Separatist. "I doe here," he writes, "ingenuously confesse that I am far from the opinion of them which Seperate from our Church concerning the Set forme of prayer (although from some of them I received part of my education in Cambridge)." This makes it quite impossible to accept the statements of Barkley and the Baptist writers who connect John Smyth with the Southwark Independents and Henry Jacob. The precise date on which John Smyth and his company left for Amsterdam is unknown; but it was between 1604 and 1606. Settled there, he practised physic. "He usually took nothing of the poorer sort, and if they were rich he took half as much as other doctors did, excepting some who were well able and well minded urged more upon him." He was known to give his own garments to the poor.

Francis Johnstone was pastor of the Church at Amsterdam. He seems to have lost that "considerable maintenance" which enabled him to trace the Puritans' pamphlets. He worked as porter to a bookseller, though he was regarded as without a superior among Hebrew scholars in Europe.

In 1608 there were about three hundred communicants, including Henry Ainsworth, Richard Clifton, John Robinson, John Smyth, Thomas Helwys, William Brewster, and William Bradford, men of imperishable memory. They regarded the Church as "a company of people called and separated from the world by the word of God, and bound together by a voluntary profession of faith." They elected their own pastor, teachers and elders, deacons, and one "ancient widow for a deaconess," who was above sixty years old. She visited "the sick and weak, especially the women, and as there was need

called out maids and young women to watch and do them other helps as their necessity did require, and if they were poor she would gather relief for them of those that were able, or acquaint the deacons. She was obeyed as a mother in Israel and an officer of the Church." She usually sat in a convenient place in the congregation, "with a little birchen rod in her hand, and kept little children in great awe from disturbing the congregation."

In 1610 Johnstone and Ainsworth divided the Church upon the question of the place of the elders.

John Canne, who became famous as pastor of the Baptist Church in Bristol, was minister of Johnstone's company in 1632—1634.

In 1608 John Smyth and thirty-six others announced their conclusion that baptism was a sign of admission to the Church for such only as were of competent age to understand it, and not for infants even of the faithful. They further asserted that there was a distinct difference between the Old and New Testaments, that they were not equally bound by the Old as by the New, and that they accepted the theology of Arminius rather than Calvin. Smyth has been called the "*Se-Baptist*" because he baptised himself. This has been disputed, but, in all deference to the opinions of some Baptist writers, this matter should be regarded as settled. There is no room to doubt that Robinson, Jessop, and others attacked Mr. Smyth for baptising himself, and demanded the Scripture authority for such an unheard-of proceeding.

In 1609 Smyth and thirty-two of his community applied for admission into the Waterlander Mennonite Church, of which Lubbert Gerrits was pastor. They regretted and confessed their error "that they undertook to baptise *themselves* contrary to the order appointed by Christ."

Helwys, Morton, and two others defended the propriety of their action. Smyth declared that he believed that there was "no Church to whom we could join with a good conscience,"

and that, therefore, they might baptise themselves and reform the Church, but when he saw that the Mennonite Churches were true Churches, and had true ministers "from which baptism may orderly be had," it was not "proper for two or three private persons to baptise and set up Churches without first joining themselves to the true Churches already existing." To safeguard himself from the charge of apostolic succession in its grosser form, he writes, "I deny all succession, except in the truth, and I hold that we are not to violate the order of the primitive Church except necessity urge a dispensation." It "was not lawful for everyone that seeketh the truth to baptise, for then there might be as many Churches as couples in the world."

The confession of faith issued as "Smyth's Confession" (Evans's "Baptists," vol. i., p. 257), and described "as the first Baptist creed of modern times," was regarded by Mr. Underhill as the work of Smyth and Helwys, they both subscribing it, but we now know that it is nearly a verbatim translation of the work of Hans de Rys, who says of it, "This confession I first wrote on entreaty, and on behalf of several Englishmen fled from England for conscience' sake" (Schyn's History, vol. ii., p. 157). A tract in York Minster Library, "Smyth's Life," gives the "Confession" in one hundred propositions. It was subscribed by the Englishmen, and embodied the earlier confessions issued by them. Judged by the time, it is wonderful alike for its sanity and tolerant catholicity. The general belief was that children dying unbaptised went to perdition. "Smyth's Confession" says "that infants are conceived and born in innocency, without sin, and that they dying therefore are all undoubtedly saved, which is to be understood of all infants who live in the world."

The claim to infallibility in some form or other was made by each sect, to the exclusion of the rest. It is refreshing to read Smyth "that all repenting and believing Christians are brethren in the communion of the outward visible Church wherever they may live, or by what name they may be named ;

that none ought to be kept from the outward communion of the Church but those who remain impenitent and deny the power of godliness (2 Tim. iii. 15, 18), and *none ought to be rejected on account of ignorance and error* or weakness, so long as they retain their repentance and faith in Christ, but they ought to be taught with meekness. Those who are strong ought to bear the weak and support one another in love."

Upon the burning question of apostolic succession there is this declaration, "that there is no succession in that outward Church where the truth is, but the succession is only from heaven, and that the new creature only has the thing signified and the substance whereof the visible Church with its ordinances are the figure and shadow."

Upon the relation of the civil power to the Church the "Confession" declares "that the magistrate by virtue of his office is not to meddle with religion or matters of conscience, nor to compel men to this or to that form of religion or doctrine, but to leave the Christian religion to the free conscience of everyone, and meddle only with political matters (Rom. xiii. 3 and 4), namely, injustice and wrong of one against another, so as murder, adultery, theft, and the like, because Christ alone is the King and Lawgiver of the Church and conscience." It also asserted "that in the necessity of the Church and poor brethren all things" (*i.e.* possessions) "ought to be common, nay, that one Church ought to assist the other Church in its want."

Mr. Helwys, John Morton, and others returned to England in 1611. They were troubled because their countrymen were left without the light of truth. They came to preach the Gospel of the free love of God to all, and the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ. Judged by their own time or any time, they stand out conspicuous for sweet reasonableness and large-heartedness. Their creed was not intended to be binding upon others. It was issued for purposes of instruction only, but we question whether the quotations we have given can be

matched even in creeds of our own time. To these poor preachers we may still look as followers who watch the pathfinders far up the heights. Their teaching was modified by the English soil, but it soon took deep root, and has borne some fruit in all sections of our varied religious life.

In 1612 John Smyth died. His burial is entered in the register of the New Church of Amsterdam on the 1st of September, 1612, where he was buried. At the time of his decease he lodged in the "hinder part of the great bakehouse," then belonging to John Munter, where religious meetings were held by the English who joined the Mennonites. He was a restless soul, ever anxious to push his reasoning to the logical conclusion. If needs be, he could plough the lonely furrow. The faith that truth is always vindicated by time, and therefore her disciples can wait, made him careless of the moment. Not yet has John Smyth come to his own place in ecclesiastical history. His great spirit would have been ill at ease with many of the narrow-minded who claim descent from him. "This eminent man, while honoured by those who opposed him in England for his great talents, and on all hands admitted to have been one of the most able of the Separatists, has been charged by his brethren with the inconstancy of his opinions, and the charge has been repeated by modern writers. For this there appears not to have been the slightest ground, excepting that, in his desire to possess the whole truth, he carried out the principles of the separation to their logical issue. He was the first enunciator in England of the great principles of complete and perfect religious freedom as opposed to a partial toleration by the State of certain tolerable opinions. His life and death do honour to his Christian character, while the General Baptist Churches, of whose religious principles he was the enunciator, were the consistent and uniform advocates of religious liberty" ("Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth," p. 53).

In 1612 was formed the first Baptist Church of Englishmen

on English soil. This was three years prior to the full union of the Church in Amsterdam with the Mennonite body. Very much has been made of this, but it does not alter the facts—that they signed the confession of faith, that any who went to Holland were accepted as members of the Mennonite Church without being required to undergo baptism or any initial ceremony, that they corresponded with each other, and differences in England were referred to the decision of the larger Church in Amsterdam. In 1622 there were such Churches in London, Lincoln, Sarum, Coventry, Tiverton, Kent, and Chatham. This close connection with the Menno-nites explains some curious practices which soon died out. The ceremony of washing the disciples' feet as an indication of humility was soon discontinued.

Concerning the London congregation little is known except that Anabaptists united with them under Helwys and John Morton, his successor. They must have had considerable courage, for their meeting-place was by Newgate.

Professor Masson, in his "Life of Milton," says, "This obscure Baptist congregation seems to have become the depository for all England of the absolute principle of liberty of conscience expressed in the Amsterdam confession, as distinct from the more stinted principle advocated by the general body of the Independents." "It was, in short, from this little dingy meeting-house somewhere in old London that there flashed out first in England the absolute doctrine of religious liberty."

The sufferings of the Baptists during the reign of James led them to present petitions to Parliament praying for freedom to worship God in accordance with their consciences. The printing press became a pulpit from which the prisoners could preach while in their cells. In the Bodleian Library at Oxford there are three small books which are attributed to Mr. Helwys. One is a transcript of a Dutch piece upon the points in dispute among Anabaptists in the "Low Countries." Another, published in 1611, is "A Short and Plain Proofoe by the Word

and Workes of God that God's Decree is not the Cause of any man's sinne or condemnation, and that all men are redeemed by Christ, and that no infants are condemned." The third and most important bears date 1612, but has no indication as to the publisher or the place where it was printed. It is entitled "A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity." On the flyleaf, written in a beautifully clear and firm hand, there is a passage which bears all the usual indications of a dedication in a presentation copy. It begins "Heare, O King, and despise not ye Counsell of ye Poore." It concludes with "God save ye King," and the signature is "Thomas Helwys." The little book is a plea for liberty. The remarkable part of it is the dedication, in which Mr. Helwys bravely says, "The King is a mortal man, and not God, therefore hath no power over the immortal souls of his subjects to make laws and ordinances for them, and to set spiritual lords over them. If the King has authority to make spiritual lords and laws, then he is an immortal God, and not a mortal man."

No English monarch had heard such words before. They heralded the dawn of a new day. James has been described as the Solomon of his age. It is a fitting description of the man, if it is intended that he was the cleverest fool and the basest hypocrite who talked religion from a throne. To conciliate the Scotch, the King agreed to the Hampton Court Conference. Dr. Reynolds was pleading for the restoration of the liberty of "prophesyings," and for the establishment of provincial synods under the presidency of the bishops. Upon this the King remarked, "Then 'Jack,' and 'Tom,' and 'Will,' and 'Dick' shall meet and at their pleasure censure me and my council and all our proceedings. Then Will will stand up and say, 'It must be thus'; then Dick shall reply, 'Nay, marry, but we will have it thus.'" The King added, "If this is all your party hath to say, I will make them conform themselves, or else I will harry them out of the land, or else do worse." There was little hope that the King would deal gently

with Baptists who, while they challenged their enemies to convict them of disloyalty to his Majesty or injury to their neighbours, yet declared that in all matters of conscience no king or prince could be above the Scriptures.

To King James the utterances of the Baptists appeared rank treason. He had declared his belief in the Divine right of kings. He had said, "Kings are justly called gods, for they do exercise a manner or resemblance of Divine power upon earth, for, if you will consider the attributes of God, you shall see how they agree in the person of a king. God hath power to create or destroy, to make or unmake at His pleasure; to give life or to send death; to judge all, and be judged nor accountable to none; to raise low things and to make high things low at His pleasure, and to God both soul and body are due; the like power have kings. They make and unmake their subjects; they have power of raising and casting down, of life and death, judges over all their subjects in all causes, and yet accountable to none but God only; they have power to exalt low things and abase high things, and to make of their subjects, like men at chess, a pawn to take a bishop or a knight, and to cry up or down any of their subjects as they do their money, and to the king is due both the affections of the soul and the services of the body of his subjects" (Works, pp. 529, 531).

The petition presented in 1614 by Leonard Busher must have seemed to his Majesty very like an indictment of his action. It was entitled "Religious Peace; or, A Plea for Liberty of Conscience." It was the first logical pronouncement in the English language of the imperishable claim of every man to liberty of thought and conscience. Leonard Busher was probably a descendant of one of the Walloon refugees. In the list of names of the subscribers to a loan to Elizabeth in 1588 there is a "Domynie" Busher down for £100. Whatever his family connections, Leonard Busher was indeed a noble man. He speaks of himself as labouring for his living,

and being unable to print two works which he had written. One he calls "A Declaration of Certain False Translations of the New Testament." He appears to have been acquainted with the Greek language, and zealous for the purity of the Church and truthful translations of the Scriptures. Some day the Baptists will erect a memorial in honour of the writer of the first defence of liberty of conscience and liberty of the press published in the English language. The work has a rugged exterior, but its conception is above all praise in its largeness of outlook and purpose. Here are just three extracts to indicate its quality:—

"I read that Jews, Christians, and Turks are tolerated in Constantinople, and yet are peaceable, though so contrary the one to the other. If this be so, how much more ought Christians not to force one another to religion! And how much more ought Christians to tolerate Christians when the Turks do tolerate them! Shall we be less merciful than the Turks, or shall we leave the Turks to persecute Christians? It is not only unmerciful, but unnatural and abominable, yea monstrous, for one Christian to vex and destroy another for differences and questions of religion."

"And the King and Parliament may please to permit all sorts of Christians, yea Jews, Turks, and Pagans, so long as they are peaceable and no malefactors, as is above mentioned, which if they be found to be under two or three witnesses, let them be punished according to God's word. Also if any be found to be willing liars, false accusers, false allegers and quoters of Scripture or other men's writings, as some men willingly do, let them be punished according to right and justice; it is due desert, not persecution. But let God's word have its full and free passage among them all, even to the end of their lives, in all bountifulness, longsuffering, and patience, knowing that it is ordained by God's rich mercy to lead infidels and such as err into repentance and amendment."

"That for the more peace and quietness, and for the

satisfying of the weak and simple, among so many persons differing in religion, it be lawful for any person or persons, yea Jews and Papists, to unite, dispute, confer and reason, *print and publish* any matter touching religion, either for or against whomsoever, always provided they allege no fathers for proof of any point of religion, but only the Holy Scriptures."

As Busher says, "The bishops should understand it is preaching, and not persecuting, that getteth the people to church." But his Majesty's bishops had been armed and weaponed with fire and sword, and not with Scripture. Many of the Anabaptists were imprisoned. "It is no small persecution to lie many years in filthy prisons in hunger, cold, idleness, divided from wife, family, and calling, left in continual miseries and temptations, so that death would be to many less persecution." Yet, in spite of it all, Busher is able to put humour into his treatise. Some passages remind one of the Martin Marprelate pamphlets. He says "that all sorts of people tainted with treason when from home might be known by being compelled to wear a black hat with two white signs, one before and one behind."

Two years after another petition was presented to the King entitled "Persecution for Religion Judged and Condemned." This work is attributed to John Morton, who was a member of Mr. Helwys's Church. About this there is some doubt, however, as the Preface concludes, "By Christ's unworthy witnesses, his Majesty's faithful subjects, commonly but most falsely called 'Anabaptists.'" The reason for attributing the little book to Mr. Morton is the resemblance between the style of this and a work known to be his. It is written in form of dialogue, and contains some striking passages. "Anti-Christian" is asking his opponent whether persecution has been used in Scriptural times. "Why," he says, "it is manifest by the example of the Apostle Peter smiting Ananias and Sapphira to death, and of the Apostle Paul striking Elymas the sorcerer blind, and also by delivering Hymenæus and Alexander unto

Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that punishment upon the body may be used, for if it was lawful for them to smite to death and the like, though by extraordinary means, then it must be lawful for us by ordinary means, since extraordinary means now fail. If you say it be not lawful for us, then you may say it was not lawful for them, and that were to accuse them of laying a false foundation, which none fearing God would affirm." The reply to this specious argument is adroit and unanswerable: "I dare not once admit of a thought as to disallow that truth which was the foundation of the Apostles, but for your argument of Peter's extraordinary smiting of Ananias and Sapphira, he neither laid hands on them nor threatened them by word, only he declared what should befall them from God, and therefore serveth nothing to your purpose; also that of Paul to Elymas, he laid no hands upon him, but only declared the Lord's hand upon him and the judgment that should follow. If you can so pronounce, and it so come to pass upon any, do it, and then it may be you may be accounted master-builders and layers of a new foundation or another gospel."

There is a noteworthy declaration of liberty of conscience in the epistle which is prefixed to the dialogue. The words are, "We do unfeignedly acknowledge the authority of earthly magistrates, God's blessed ordinance, and that all earthly authority and command appertains to them. Let them command what they will, we must obey, either to do or to suffer upon pain of God's displeasure besides their punishment. But all men must let God alone with His right, which is to be Lord and Lawgiver to the soul, and not command obedience to God where He commandeth none."

The King paid little heed to the petitions. Baptists were called upon to endure loss of goods, imprisonment, and severe persecutions, not for any disloyalty, but because they dared not assent to nor practise in the worship of God those things which they deemed contrary to His commands. Constrained by his urgent necessities, James in 1620 summoned both

Houses of Parliament, but was most unwilling that they should enter upon a consideration of the condition of the people. His inaugural speech promised no relief to the tender consciences. His former professions of liberty were forgotten. "For religion," he says, "there are laws enough, so as the true intent and execution follow. The maintenance of religion stands in two points : persuasion, which must precede, and compulsion, which must follow, for as all the world cannot create a new creature, be it never so little, so no law of man can make a good Christian in heart without inward grace."

His Majesty declared, with a show of sympathy, that he hoped God would forbid that he should compel men's consciences. He would leave them to the laws of the kingdom.

The humble supplication which the Baptists now presented showed their desire to be loyal to his Majesty's person, crown, and state. It also showed that the condition of the petitioners was terrible. It says, "Our miseries are long and lingering imprisonments for many years in divers counties in England, in which many have died and left behind them widows and many small children, taking away our goods and others the like, of which we can make good probation, not for any disloyalty to your Majesty or hurt to mortal man, our adversaries themselves being judges."

Roger Williams tells us the story of the origin of the "Humble Supplication." The author was in prison in Newgate. Not having the use of pen or ink, he learned to write in milk upon sheets of paper brought to him by the woman who carried in bottles of milk sent by a friend. The paper was used as stoppers for the bottles. When it was dried it was returned with the empty bottles. Had it been examined, nothing would have appeared upon the surface, but the way of reading it by holding it up before the fire was known to his friend to whom the papers were sent. He transcribed and kept them, and finally they were presented to King James. The work is divided into ten chapters,

wherein Baptist opinions as to the Bible being the rule of faith, the method of ascertaining its meaning, and the folly and unscripturalness of persecuting in the name of religion are set forth.

Considerable attention is given to his Majesty's own utterances upon the subject, and great courage is shown in the freedom with which the King's words are handled: "You may make and mend your laws and be judge and punisher of the transgressors thereof, but you cannot make and mend God's laws. They are perfect already. You may not add or diminish nor be judge nor monarch of His Church; that is Christ's right. He left neither you nor any mortal man His deputy, but only the Holy Ghost, as your Highness acknowledged, and whosoever erreth from the truth, his judgment is set down, and the time thereof. This then is the sum of our humble petition, that your Majesty would be pleased not to persecute your faithful subjects, who are obedient unto you in all civil worship and service, and walking in the practice of what God's word requireth of us for spiritual worship even as we have faith."

Edward Wightman, of Burton-on-Trent, was examined by the council at Lichfield on the charge of heresy. One of the counts in the indictment was that he declared "the use of baptism to be administered in water only to converts of sufficient age and understanding." The poor man seems to have been a demented dreamer, whose mental condition would have justified his being placed under proper care, but the bishops could not get him, simpleton though he was, to accept their statement of doctrine concerning the sacraments. They found him guilty of many heresies, some of which were probably unknown to him, even by name. It was declared in the warrant by which he was handed over to the civil authorities that he was guilty of the Anabaptists' heresies and other "execrable and unheard-of opinions by the instinct of Satan, by him excogitated and holden." What was the precise

meaning of this charge it is hardly likely the bishops themselves understood, but it was enough for James, the defender of the faith and upholder of the established religion, to send poor Edward Wightman to the martyr's death.

Notwithstanding the persecution, the Baptists increased, and did not lack the courage of their convictions. They presented petitions to Parliament and issued a confession of faith. The King's saying "No bishop, no king," embodied his conception that the monarchy rests upon Divine appointment, but also needs the bishops for its foundation. To deny the claim of the bishops was therefore to weaken the authority of the throne. As Macaulay says, "it was no light thing that on the eve of a decisive struggle between our kings and parliaments royalty should be exhibited to the world stammering, slobbering, shedding unmanly tears, trembling at a drawn sword, and talking in the style alternately of a buffoon and a pedagogue."

A letter signed "H. H." and dated May 10th, 1622, fell into the hands of an advocate of the State Church. It was an account of the sentiments held by the Baptists. The person who intercepted it was in all probability the famous Dr. John Preston. He wrote a pamphlet under the title "Anabaptismes Mystery of Iniquity Unmasked," by J. P., in 1623. We are indebted to the author for some information. He says that the Baptists wrote much in defence of their opinions and were in the habit of producing great numbers of Scriptures to prove their doctrine, and that they maintained an appearance of more holiness than their opponents.

There is some reason to believe that in 1626 there was a Baptist Church existing at Amersham in Buckinghamshire. The first page of an old Church book bearing that date was quoted by Mr. Taylor in his "History of the General Baptists."

The early Baptists spread their opinions by discussion. They seemed ever ready to enter into an argument. Their ministers, when in prison, somehow managed to carry on a friendly discussion with their fellow-prisoners, and thus to spread the truth.

CHAPTER V

THE RISE OF THE PARTICULAR BAPTISTS AND THE STORY OF

WILLIAM KIFFIN

THE Particular Baptists formed their first Church in 1633. In less than ten years they had seven Churches in London, and were strong enough to issue a confession of faith and a petition to Parliament. The distinction between General and Particular Baptists was well known. The Generals were Arminians, and the Particulars Calvinists. They differed widely over the doctrines of personal election and final perseverance. For many years members of the one body would not commune with the other. Their Churches had no fellowship; their ministers met in separate associations. Time has healed the breaches.

The story of the origin of the Particular Baptists is told in what is called the Kiffin MS. About this writing there has been considerable controversy. Some American scholars have disputed its statement as to the date of the introduction of baptism as a confession of faith for believers only. The MS. tells that there was a congregation of Protestant Dissenters of the Independent persuasion in London gathered in the year 1616, whereof Mr. Henry Jacob was the first pastor, and after him Mr. John Lathrop, who was their minister at this time. In this society several persons, finding that the congregations kept not to their first principles of separation, and being also convinced that baptism was not to be administered to infants, but to such only as professed faith in Christ, desired that they might be dismissed from that communion, and allowed to form a distinct congregation in

such order as was most agreeable to their own sentiments. The Church, considering they were now a numerous body, and therefore it was dangerous for them to meet together in such times of persecution, and believing that those who wished to withdraw were acting conscientiously, agreed. On the 12th of September, 1633, the new Church was formed. Their minister was Mr. John Spilisbury. Their number is uncertain, because to the mention of the names of about twenty men and women it is added "with divers others." Their number was increased under the ministry of Mr. Jessey at the Independent Church. He and his people could not rest in their old views concerning baptism. First it was the mode, and then the subjects, that troubled them. Finally, in 1645 Mr. Jessey was immersed by Mr. Hanserd Knollys. In the Kiffin MS. there is an account of the introduction of immersion into this Church in 1640. It is as follows, with the quaint spelling of the original :

"1640, 3rd Mo.—The Church became two by mutuall consent, just halfe being with Mr. P. Barebone, and y^e other halfe with Mr. H. Jessey. Mr. Rich^d Blunt, wth him, being convinced of Baptism, y^t also it ought to be by dipping in y^e body into y^e water, resembling Burial and rising again (Col. ii. 12 and Romanes vi. 4), had sober Conference about it in y^e Church, and then wth some of the forenamed who also were so convinced, and after Prayer and Conference about their so enjoying it, none having then so practiced it in England to professed Believers, and hearing that some in y^e Netherlands had so practised, they agreed and sent over Mr. Rich^d Blunt (who understood Dutch) with letters of Commendation, and who was kindly accepted there, and returned with letters from them : Jo. Batten, a teacher there, and from that Church to such as sent him.

"1641.—They proceed on therein, viz., those persons y^t ware perswaded Baptism should be by dipping y^e body had mett in two companyes, and did intend so to meet after this, all those Agreed to proceed alike together ; and then manifesting (not

by any formal Words) a covenant (wth Word was scrupled by some of them, but by mutuall desires and agreement each Testified) those two companyes did set apart one to baptise the rest ; so it was solemnly performed by them. Mr. Blunt baptised Mr. Blacklock, y^t was a teacher amongst them, and Mr. Blunt being baptised, he and Mr. Blacklock Baptised y^e rest of their friends y^t ware so minded, and many being added to them, they increased much."

This English Church received baptism through the "Saints," who were really disciples of the brothers Van der Kodde, who in 1619 began their work in Rynsburg. They were called "Collegianten." They practised immersion. In many respects they are represented by the Plymouth Brethren of our days. They acknowledged all who were followers of Christ as brethren, and insisted upon the suspension of all controversies and the toleration of all opinions not condemned in the Scriptures. It is curious to notice their affinity with the modern Quakers. In 1743 they were nicknamed "Quakers." They insisted that the office of pastor was open to all believers, and no ministry, as distinct from the members of the Church, was permissible. Their works of charity still continue in orphanage and hospital, though as a body they have ceased to exist.

Mr. Henry Jessey was a man of considerable repute. It may not be out of place to give a short sketch of him. He was born in 1601 at West Rounton, in Yorkshire, where his father was minister. At the age of seventeen he went to St. John's College, Cambridge. He graduated Master of Arts. At the age of twenty-one he dated his conversion to God. Upon the death of his father his means became straitened. He says that he had threepence a day, and out of that paid a little for hiring books, as well as for his food. In the year 1627 he was ordained, and six years later presented with the living of Aughton. He does not seem to have been very happy. Two years later he came to take pastoral charge of a Dissenting congregation in London. He was often imprisoned for preaching. Upon one occasion in

April, 1640, several congregations assembled upon Tower Hill. Mr. Jessey was to have preached, but the service was interrupted, and he was taken to the Tower, and afterwards bound over by Archbishop Laud to appear at the next sessions. A year later he was imprisoned by the Lord Mayor. After he became a Baptist he exercised a great catholicity. He divided his labours between St. George's Church, Southwark, of which he was one of the regular preachers and is sometimes described as rector, and Woodmongers' Hall, where he preached to his own people, who became a considerable congregation. He also preached regularly at Ely House and in the Savoy. It is recorded that over thirty families were entirely supported by his charity. He remained unmarried that he might have the more money to give away. When he was dying, one by his bedside said to him, "They among whom you have laboured can witness that you have been a faithful servant of Christ, making His glory your utmost end for the good of souls." "Say no more about that," he whispered, "but exalt God." He died in 1663, and was buried with considerable ceremony from the Woodmongers' Hall.

Anthony à Wood, a writer of the time, says, "He being then accounted the oracle and idol of his faction, was on the seventh day of the same month laid to sleep with his fathers in a hole made in the yard joining to Old Bedlam, Moorfield, in the suburbs of London, attended with a strange assembly of fanatics, mostly Anabaptists, that met upon the very point of time, all at the same instant, to do honour to their departed brother." Several thousand people attended his funeral. Unfortunately, it is now impossible to know the exact spot of his grave.

By the year 1644 the number of Particular Baptist Churches had increased to seven. In that year these seven Churches and one French Church of the same faith issued a confession composed of fifty articles, which, besides giving a brief exposition of Calvinistic theology, pronounces baptism "an ordinance of the New Testament given by Christ, to be dispensed upon

persons possessing faith or who are disciples or taught, who upon profession of faith, ought to be baptised," and afterwards to partake of the Lord's Supper. It then specifies "that the way and manner of the dispensing this ordinance is dipping or plunging the body under water, it being a sign must answer to the thing signified, which is that interest the saints have in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ." A note to this section adds, "The word *baptizo* signifies to dip or plunge, yet so as convenient garments be upon both the administrator and subject with all modesty." So far as we know, this is the first confession in which baptism in explicit terms is defined as immersion, though immersion could not have been a strange idea among Baptists. It was the custom to immerse, as it is still commanded in the baptismal service of the State Church that after naming the child, "if they shall certify him that the child may well endure it, he shall dip it in the water discreetly and warily." Baptists do not attach importance to the doctrine of apostolic succession. If they believed that the New Testament contained any command which they regarded as binding upon their consciences they would carry it out without being deterred by the absence of obedience on the part of others. To them the question would not be who practised it, but who commanded it. Dr. Culross says, "Had Baptists thought anything depended upon it, they might have traced their pedigree back to New Testament times, and claimed apostolic succession. The channel of succession was certainly purer, if humbler, than through the apostate Church of Rome. But they were content to rest on Scripture alone, and, as they found only believers' baptism there, they adhered to that." The confession of faith is a distinct landmark in the practice of Baptists, though it should be remembered that it was not set forth to compel or bind the faith of any person; it was for purposes of information only. It was presented to both Houses of Parliament in the hope that it would silence scandalous misrepresentations as to what was the teaching of the Baptists.

The confession was signed by fifteen ministers, whose names stood as follows :—

“ William Kiffin.
Thomas Patience.
John Spilsbury.
George Tipping.
Samuel Richardson.
Thomas Skippard.
Thomas Munday.
Thomas Gunne.
John Mabbat.
John Webbe.
Thomas Kilcop.
Paul Hobson.
Thomas Gore.
Joseph Phelps.
Edward Heath.”

Ivimey says, “ In this list there are five persons who are not mentioned in the edition of 1646. Their names are Thomas Skippard, John Mabbat, John Webbe, Joseph Phelps, and Edward Heath. In the other there are five names not in this, viz., Hanserd Knollys, Benj. Coxe, Thomas Holmes, and two French pastors, of whom or their Church we know nothing.”

“ We are not certain where these seven Churches assembled ; but we know that there were at this time Mr. Keach’s Church, Devonshire Square, Mr. Spilsbury’s at Wapping, Mr. Knollys’ in Great St. Helen’s, Mr. Hobson’s in Crutched Friars, Mr. Barber’s in Bishopsgate Street, Mr. Lamb’s in Coleman Street, and a Church at Glaziers’ Hall.” It is difficult to obtain particulars of these communities. Persecution made them careful not to keep records which might be used as evidence against them. Such information as we have is in the pages of pamphlets and old records, most of them the work of opponents. We shall piece these together in the hope of obtaining something like an accurate picture of the men to whom the main

body of the Baptists owe their earliest Church organisations in England.

Crosby and other writers seem to think that the Baptists, prior to this time, were mixed up with other Christian bodies, and that they may have had some Churches of their own, or at least that the account in the Kiffin MS. cannot be accepted as the story of the first Church of their order in our country. There can be little doubt that many who held Baptist opinions upon some point or other found a home in the common meetings of the heretics who were too Christian to be in the Church. At the same time, it is beyond question that the Anabaptists, with their socialistic teaching, would not have been accepted by any community of their time. There were separate gatherings of Anabaptists prior to this period, but we have searched in vain for anything that corresponds to a Baptist Church in England earlier than the coming of Thomas Helwys and the writing of the Kiffin MS.

The men who sailed in the *Mayflower*, noble as they were, did not understand the doctrine of religious liberty as the Anabaptists taught it. Their representatives would not tolerate Anabaptist teaching in New England. The old Baptists stood alone as religious outcasts, not so much because of their theological views, as on account of their insistence upon the brotherhood of believers being the outcome of accepting the Gospel. The State Church would never have framed Article 38 but for the teaching of the Anabaptists. From this time they lose their identity and their name. Having found room in other communities, their teaching grew clearer with the years. On its social side it is more definite in the twentieth century than ever before, and is proclaimed as a gospel by multitudes who do not know the names of its first martyrs. The Church which did not engage in the work of social reform would now find difficulty in justifying its existence.

Close akin as were General and Particular Baptists, they did not walk in the same rank. The distinction between them was

theological. During generations they worked apart. Sometimes the strife between them was keen and bitter. There is a species of insanity which is characterised by the demented being very violent towards those he loves. From something of this sort Baptists often suffered.

As early as 1638 a Baptist Church which had migrated from Wapping met in Meeting House Yard, behind Devonshire Square. The first minister was William Kiffin, a wealthy merchant and great controversialist of his day. There has been some question as to the date of the formation of this Church. It would seem that it began in 1638, but two years after there was a dispute as to whether an unbaptised person should be called to preach. Upon this there was a friendly separation. The part that remained formed a new body, with Mr. Kiffin at their head. Ivimey says that "Mr. Kiffin presided over the Church to the time of his death in 1701, in the eighty-sixth year of his age." But most likely he resigned in 1692. He has been described as the father of the Particular Baptists. The many services he rendered to his country during the Civil War would occupy a volume. His eventful life opened in the reign of James I., and did not end till the days of William III. Left an orphan at the age of nine, he was committed to the care of a guardian who used for his own purposes the child's money, and apprenticed him, at the age of thirteen, to John Lilburn, brewer, of celebrated memory. He was the Lilburn who in the Civil War was colonel under Cromwell. Of him it was said that his temper was so violent that, if no other person existed, John would quarrel with Lilburn, and Lilburn would quarrel with John. It is not surprising that the boy ran away from his master, and wandered aimlessly about London. Passing a church, he was attracted by the people entering. He followed them, and as he listened to the Puritan preacher he was awakened to a sense of sin, which was only removed by prayerful attention to another discourse delivered some time later from the text, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth

us from all sin." He joined the Church under Mr. Lathrop, and, like his friends, soon got into trouble with the authorities. He preached wherever the opportunity occurred, and even in prison he gathered together those who listened to the word. An entry in his diary records, "Being at meeting in Southwark before differences arose between the King and the Parliament, I was taken before the justices of the peace. Judge Mallet committed me to the White Lion prison. Here I remained while the judge went the circuit into Kent. Some of the prisoners in the common gaol were incensed against me by one of them whose chambers were under mine. He intended to do me mischief, even to take away my life. Several of the prisoners had been condemned, but were reprieved, and others were brought in for great robberies. On Lord's Day evening several of them came into my room, the door being opened, and myself, wife, maidservant, and child being there. One Jackson, a noted rogue, with a great truncheon in his hand, asked me who I had in the room. I replied, 'None but what you see.' Upon the table there was some Spanish tobacco that a friend had left me. I asked him if he would accept it. Some of his company took it and thanked me. I asked them if they would drink, which they did. Jackson turned to them and bade them depart. They went to the room below. I heard them endeavouring to break the door open. I inquired what they meant to do. Jackson replied that the person in that room had engaged them to knock me on the head. Now they would do his work for him. Through much entreaty at last they desisted."

In business Mr. Kiffin was very successful, and became one of the wealthiest merchants of his time. He had great influence with notable people. Often he occupied the position of adviser to committees of the Parliament. Though he gave large help to the Parliamentary party, he does not seem to have shared the republican views held by most of his colleagues. He was a leader, not only of Baptists, but of religious people outside

the Church. Macaulay says, "Great as was the authority of Bunyan with the Baptists, Mr. Kiffin's was greater still." Upon the question of open communion he ventured to reply to the immortal dreamer. His contention was that "if once mixed communion became common, and Baptists offered all Church privileges to those who were not baptised, then it would be easy to lay aside that unjustly derided practice of dipping."

Mr. Kiffin tells how upon one occasion, coming from a meeting on Tower Hill, several persons hustled him at the door. Stones were thrown at him, one of which struck him over the eye. Some time after he met a poor man whom he describes as being very thin and miserable. This man confessed that he was the one who had thrown the stone. Now he begged that Mr. Kiffin would pray with him. This he did, and he naïvely records that the man died the next day.

In the year 1639 another congregation was formed by Mr. Kiffin, Mr. Grew, Paul Hobson, and Captain Spencer. About two years later there appeared a quarto pamphlet entitled "The Brownists' Synagogue; or, A Late Discovery of their Conventicles, Assemblies, and Places of Meeting, where they preach, and the Manner of their Praying and Preaching, with a Relation of the Names, Places, and Doctrines of those which do commonly preach, the chief of which are these: Green, the Felt-maker; Marlar, the Button-maker; Spencer, the Coachman; Rogers, the Glover, which sect is much increased of late within this city."

Upon several occasions Mr. Kiffin was brought before the Lord Mayor at the Guildhall, charged with preaching that the baptism of infants is unlawful, but, the Lord Mayor being busy upon each occasion, the case was deferred. It seems most probable that nothing more was heard about it.

There is an amusing account of Mr. Kiffin and his friends holding disputes with the famous Dr. Daniel Featley in Southwark. It is supplied in the Doctor's report of the

proceedings, which he entitled "The Dippers Dipped ; or, The Anabaptists Ducked and Plunged over Head and Ears at a Disputation in Southwark, together with a Large and Full Discourse of their Original Several Sorts, Peculiar Errors, High Attempts against the State, Capital Punishments, with an Application to these Times."

The scene is located somewhere in Southwark. Probably it was in the parish church. It was not an infrequent thing for persons of different views to hold public discussions in the parish pulpit. This was a great occasion. Sir John Lenthall, with many knights, ladies, and gentlemen, graced the proceedings. The disputants can hardly be regarded as fairly matched. Dr. Featley was a veteran debater. He had been chaplain to the English ambassador in Paris ; there he had held many disputes with the Jesuits. Upon one occasion he was said to have converted a Spanish friar.

The Baptists who were opposing the Doctor are described as a Scotchman with one named "Cuffin." Of course William Kiffin was intended. Of the other disputants there is no information. Kiffin was thirty-six, and strong for the fray. The company being placed, Dr. Featley began with prayer for a blessing upon the meeting. The Scotchman then opened the debate by announcing that "We hold that the baptism of infants cannot be proved lawful by the testimony of Scripture or by apostolic tradition. If you therefore can prove the same either way, we shall willingly submit unto you."

The Doctor expressed surprise at the question. "Are you," he asks, "Anabaptists? I am deceived in my expectations. Anabaptism is a heresy long since condemned both by the Greek and Latin Church." Then he proceeds to give the congregation his opinion of his opponents: "I could have wished that ye had brought scholars with you who knew how to dispute, which I conceive you do not, so far as I can guess by your dress, and am informed concerning your professions. There are but two ways of disputing: by authority and by

reason." Then the Doctor explains that, if they decide upon the first method, they must produce the Scriptures in the original languages, because there are errors in the translations. If they decide to dispute by reason, then they must argue in mood and figure according to logic, which, he adds, "I take to be out of your element."

Mr. Kiffin now speaks and affirms that he has not come to dispute, but to receive satisfaction of some doubts, "which if the Doctor can answer him, he shall submit." This "Cuffin," we read in the marginal note, is said to be one of the first who subscribed the Anabaptist Confession, printed in 1644. Mr. Kiffin is invited to propound what questions he pleases, and asks, "What is the nature of a visible Church, what the matter and form of it, or what the visible Church of Christ is made up of? By authority of the Scripture he wants the points proved." The Doctor replies that in the Church of England, as in the Protestant Church, there are two notes; (1) the sincere preaching of the word; (2) the due administration of the sacraments. Mr. Kiffin declares that neither of these is discernible, and denies that the Thirty-nine Articles and the Book of Common Prayer are agreeable to God's word. Dr. Featley goes a long way round to reach this question. Mr. Kiffin grows impatient and says, "I pray you, Master Doctor, come to the point." There is another digression as to the nature of Scriptural truths, and the final announcement by the Baptist that the Doctor makes an idol of the Church. So the debate goes on until the knights, ladies, and gentlemen give the Doctor great thanks for the way in which he discomfited his opponents, and, as it grew late, the conference ended. This discussion was held in the year that Charles came to grief with his parliament. It was at the very time that the Parliamentary forces were being enrolled. Within two months the royal standard was unfurled at Nottingham, and Baptists were in the ranks of the Parliamentary army.

In 1649, Richard Baxter met John Tombes in public

discussion at Bewdley. They were personal friends. Baxter does not seem to have cared to enter into dispute. His reputation would have been higher if he had kept out of it. Wood declares that all the scholars then and there present who knew the way of disputing and managing argument did conclude that Tombes got the better of Baxter. It is amusing to read Baxter's arguments. He declares that to baptise by immersion in cold weather is almost equal to murder, because death might result from a chill.

All over the country there seems to have been controversy concerning Baptist teaching. It was so misunderstood and misrepresented that Baptists were compelled to be controversialists. The reports that we have are usually rough notes written during debates, and afterwards filled in from memory. They are usually the work of opponents, but they give us a glimpse of the activity of the Baptists in spreading their principles.

There is a placard in the British Museum issued 1st December, 1645, by the Lord Mayor of London. It begins, "Whereas at the entreaty of Mr. Calamy and other ministers, as was represented to him by certain citizens, I did lately give an allowance to them to meet and to dispute with certain Anabaptists, and whereas I understood you, in pursuance of that allowance, there is a public dispute intended on Wednesday next, December 3rd, in the church of Aldermanbury, there is likely to be an extraordinary concourse of people from all parts of the city, and from other places; and that in these times of distraction there may be hazard of the disturbance of the public peace: I have therefore thought fit upon serious consideration, for prevention of inconveniences that may happen thereby, to forbid the said meeting." The document is interesting, as it shows clearly that it was a recognised custom for parishioners to have the use of their parish churches to hold discussions upon theology.

In Malcom's "Manners and Customs of London" we read that "the halls of the different companies appear at this period

to have been used for almost every public purpose, but particularly for the sighings and groanings of grace and our righteousness, and to reverberate in thrice dissonant thunder the voices of the elect who, saved themselves, dealt universal misery to all around them.

“Sunday, a world of women with green aprons get on their pattens after eight, reach Brewers’ Hall and White Hart Court by nine, are ready to burst with the Spirit a minute or two after, and are delivered to-day by ten. Much sighing at Salters’ Hall about the same hour ; great frowning at St. Paul’s while the service is singing ; a tolerable attention to the sermon.”

One of the most prominent men amongst the Particular Baptists was Mr. Hanserd Knollys. He was a powerful preacher, a keen man of affairs, and entirely devoted to the cause of Christ. His autobiography up to 1672 was published after his death, with a continuation to 1691 by his friend William Kiffin, who had been acquainted with him for more than fifty-four years.

Mr. Knollys was born in 1598 at Cawkwell, a little village seven miles from “Loweth,” in Lincolnshire. His father was the clergyman of the parish. Great care was taken of his education, and in due course he went to Cambridge, having taken his degree, which, however, he did not use. He became master of Gainsborough Free School, afterwards being ordained, and in 1631 was presented to the living of Humberstone, near Scartho, his father’s parish. He seems to have laboured with but little success, and at last he appealed to the Bishop concerning his conscientious scruples. He became a lecturer without pastoral charge, and free preacher as opportunity offered. He seems to have continued as a free lance, but with an uneasy conscience, until one day, alone in a wood, he poured out his soul to God and besought Him for guidance, and as he was going home the answer came in these words : “Go to Mr. Wheelwright, and he shall tell thee, and show thee how to

glorify God in the ministry." His experience reminds us of Bunyan, who, being ready to sink with fear, declares that he heard a voice speaking, which said, "Didst thou ever refuse to be justified by the blood of Christ?" Mr. Knollys immediately went to find Mr. Wheelwright, a clergyman who had been silenced for his Nonconformity. After much conversation Mr. Wheelwright said, "You cannot glorify God either in the ministry or in anything else, for you are building on works, not on grace." Then he opened up to him the Scriptures, and from that time Hansard Knollys became a power. The difficulties at home prompted Knollys to emigrate to New England. He reached Boston in July, 1638, and for some weeks supported himself and his family by working with his hoe in the fields. He soon discovered, however, that his experience of the government in New England was worse than under a High Commission. After four years, he says, he made up his mind that he might as well be knocked about in Old England. He returned to the home land to find the King and Parliament engaged in the first acts of a tragedy which ended with the execution of Charles.

Mr. Knollys was so poor that after paying his lodging he had but sixpence left. To his great surprise, a strange woman met him in the street, and said that there was a lodging provided for him and his wife, and she handed him twenty shillings, which Dr. Bastwick had given her for him. Such is the care of God for His own! His wife was overjoyed at the news. "My dear husband," she said, "how sweet it is to live by faith, and trust God upon His bare word! Let us rely upon Him while we live, and trust Him in all straits." Mr. Knollys engaged in teaching, and was soon appointed master of the Free School, St. Mary Axe, where he had one hundred and twenty scholars, beside boarders. A year after preachers were required for the Parliamentary army, and he volunteered. He was a decided Calvinist, yet he had no hesitation in preaching a free gospel. To all he says, "Be ye

willing to receive Christ, and the work is done; open your hearts to Christ when He knocks at the door, and calls you to come to Him; receive Him; let Him come into your hearts by His Holy Spirit and sanctifying grace." Many careless persons were led to the Cross, and Knollys became recognised as one of the most powerful preachers of his time.

Andrew Gifford, of the Pithay in Bristol, wrote to Mr. Knollys and other ministers inquiring whether in their judgment prayer is the duty of the creature, and whether unconverted persons having not the Spirit could pray. It would be interesting to read the whole of the reply, but we must content ourselves with the summary. Mr. Knollys is of opinion that prayer is an obligation, and as for unconverted persons sinning in prayer he says, "If this were so, they would be relieved from every other duty, and religion would be cashiered." The Westminster Assembly of Divines was the creation of Parliament to settle the government and liturgy of the Church of England, and for the vindicating and clearing of her doctrines. Mr. Knollys did not recognise this authority. He was asked to preach in Bow Church, which he did, and a complaint was sent against him to the Assembly. He was commanded to appear. He says, "They at last carried me before the committee, and asked me several questions, to which I gave sober and discreet answers. Among others, the chairman, Mr. White, asked me who gave me authority to preach. I told him, the Lord Jesus Christ. He then asked me whether I was a minister. I answered that I was made a priest by the prelate of Peterboro', but I had renounced that ordination, and did here again renounce the same." Mr. Knollys then proceeded to repeat the sermons for the benefit of the ministers. At the close they seemed to have been confounded, for all that they did was to tell him to retire, and the gaoler declined to take charge of him. After waiting a while he went his way without any blame or fine. To avoid similar interruptions Mr. Knollys took a lease of Broken Wharf, and afterwards

gathered a Church of baptised believers in Great St. Helen's, where he continued until the landlord insisted upon his leaving because he was too near St. Helen's Church. He was again before the Assembly for preaching, and was ordered to preach no more, to which he immediately replied, he certainly would preach, both publicly and from house to house. He would obey Christ, who had commanded him, rather than those who forbade him, and away he went to preach.

On May 26th, 1646, the Lord Mayor, aldermen, and Common Council presented a petition to Parliament in which they desired that some strict and speedy course might be taken for suppressing all private and separate congregations, that "all Anabaptists, Brownists, heretics, schismatics, blasphemers, and all other sectaries who conform not to the public discipline established or to be established by Parliament may be fully declared against, and some effectual course settled for proceeding against such persons, and that no person disaffected to Presbyterian government set forth or to be set forth by Parliament may be employed in any place of public trust." The shadow of the new tyranny was already beginning to fall. Two years later the Lords and Commons passed an ordinance for suppressing blasphemies and heresies. It contained a list of heresies any of which, obstinately maintained, exposed the holder "to the pains of death without the benefit of clergy." There is a second list of errors which exposed the holder to imprisonment "till he shall find the sufficient sureties that he should not publish or maintain the same errors any more." Among these errors is that of declaring that the baptising of infants is unlawful. No wonder Milton wrote, "New presbyter is but old priest writ large"! The Westminster divines rebuked the Parliament for allowing Baptists to increase, and for tolerating heresy. It was not understood that the freedom to proclaim the truth involved the liberty to preach error. It does not seem possible for any Church to be established by the State without becoming intolerant in the process.



WILLIAM KIFFIN.

CHAPTER VI

BAPTIST LIFE AND TEACHING UNDER CHARLES I

THE Baptists suffered much from the severity of Archbishop Laud, the father of the Catholic movement in the State Church. The Court of High Commission, established under Elizabeth, was his chief instrument of oppression. This court, responsible to the King alone, was dominated by Laud, and used its power to fine, imprison, and torture by cutting off ears, slitting noses, and branding with burning irons those it could not reduce to conformity by milder means.

Laud is saint or Satan according to the writer's theological party, but in sober truth the little impetuous man was neither. "Though not literally destitute of religion," says Hallam, "it was so subordinate to worldly interest, and so blended in his mind with the impure alloy of temporal pride, that he became an intolerant persecutor of the Puritan clergy, not from bigotry—which in its usual sense he never displayed—but systematic policy." To do him justice, we must ask what was behind that terribly "systematic policy." Was he playing an assumed part, or was he a sincere, though misguided, man? We think the latter most in accordance with the facts. There is no doubt about the iron rule he exercised and the deep hatred of the people with which he was rewarded. When he was committed to the Tower, "every street rang with ballads; every wall was covered with lampoons of which the Archbishop was the subject."

The key to his policy is his fundamental idea of religion. In the thesis which he defended in Oxford for his B.D.

degree, he laid down two propositions: "the necessity of baptism as the vehicle of regeneration" and "the necessity of a historic episcopacy to a true Church." By religion he did not mean what the Puritans and Baptists meant by the word. This called forth Carlyle's comment that "in Scotland Dr. Laud, much to his regret, found no religion at all, no surplices, no altars in the east end or anywhere, no bowing, no responding, not the smallest regularity of fuglemanship or devotional drill exercise, in short no religion at all that I can see." His conception of religion was ceremonial. Trifles of ritual were to him matters of life and death. He persecuted Baptists without mercy, yet we remember that his reputation has come through the test without being blackened by the common crimes of his times. He was chaste and generous—Windsor, Reading, and Oxford show lasting monuments of his beneficence; proud, yet not given to vulgar ostentation. "His hands were never defiled by the touch of a bribe." (See Calendar of State Papers, 1635.) The aim he pursued was twofold—to free the State Church from Calvinism and to establish the Church as distinct from Rome and Geneva. He was early described as a "mongrel, half Papist, half Protestant." The charge may have been true, but he had chapter and verse for his actions in the recognised rules and laws of the Church, and to these he constantly appealed. To those who would adopt the forms he was prepared to give some latitude in interpreting the formularies. He wrote, "The Church of England never declared that every one of her articles are fundamental in the faith; for it is one thing to say no one of them is superstitious or erroneous, and quite another to say every one of them is fundamental, and that in every part of it, to all men's belief."

Mr. Gladstone said that he was the first Primate of all England for many generations who proved himself by his acts to be a "tolerant theologian." His tolerance was only extended to those who made a show of conformity; for others there was

the "systematic policy," the fine, the prison. Some historic characters have well-nigh redeemed their reputations by the manner in which they faced death. Perhaps the only beautiful thing in Laud's life is his death. His resolute courage enabled him to scorn the suggestion of Hugo Grotius that he might escape without hindrance; his prayer on the scaffold breathed resignation and hope. Surely "nothing in life became him like the leaving it."

The persecution of Nonconformity was sanctioned by James I. as suppressing treason. To Charles I. it was a means of raising money. Neither of them acted from religious motives.

Laud created the reaction seen in the Civil Wars, but he also created that Catholic movement which now holds through its representatives nearly every pulpit in the English Church. The civil disabilities did not quench the spirit of the Baptists; they grew strong as they faced the storm.

In Bell Alley, Coleman Street, there was a Baptist Church in 1640, of which Mr. Thomas Lamb was minister. This community held a strong position for many years. Mr. Lamb had worked as a soap-boiler until called by the Church of which he was a member to preach. He was a brave man, and, though frequently imprisoned, went back to his ministry directly he was liberated, knowing that the sure result would be his return to the loathsome gaol. He used to say that "no man was fit to preach who would not preach for God's sake though he was sure to die for it as soon as he had finished." In the home counties Mr. Lamb was very popular, and many converts were gathered.

Among the assistant pastors or preachers authorised by the Church was Mr. Henry Denne, a Cambridge University man, who upon taking orders in the State Church received the living of Pyrton, in Herts, where he laboured for about ten years. In 1643 he was immersed, and joined the Baptists. A contemporary described him as "the ablest man in England

for prayer, expounding, and preaching." Within a year he was in prison, where he discovered the famous Dr. Featley, who had published that amusing work entitled "The Dippers Dipt." Mr. Denne managed to write a criticism which was conveyed to the Doctor, with a challenge to him to reply to the arguments. This he undertook to do, but after some days' consideration decided that it would be better to leave the matter alone. The Church at Fenstanton was gathered by Mr. Denne's instrumentality, and became a mother of Churches. In Lincolnshire, at Spalding, another Church was formed, and believers were baptised in the waters of "Little Croft" under the protecting shades of the evening, but Mr. Denne was arrested and again cast into prison.

In Kent, prior to the Civil Wars, the Baptists were a considerable power. Their most prominent leaders were the brothers William and David Jeffery, of Penshurst. William had probably been connected with Mr. Lamb. He became a preacher at Bradburn, now Bessell's Green, near to Sevenoaks. Mr. Jeffery wrote "The Whole Faith of Man," which was in a second edition in 1659. The time when Mr. Jeffery and his people commenced the practice of baptism has remained in doubt. Mr. Adam Taylor thinks it was some years before the Civil Wars. We are able to give some fresh and authentic information concerning this early Church. Some years ago we heard a vague word concerning a stolen "minute book" of an ancient meeting-house at Tunbridge Wells. We were able to trace it, and upon examination found it to be in all probability the earliest record of English Baptist associations which we possess. It also contains the "Acts of the Church," which show that in 1646 there was a company of baptised believers in Bradburn very near in doctrine and practice to the Mennonites, from whom John Smyth received baptism. The following extracts give a glimpse of the inner Church life:—

"A Register Book or Record of the Congregation of Jesus

Christ Inhabiting in and about Speldhurst and Pembury, in Kent, whose beginning was as followeth :—

“About the yeares of o^r Lord God 1646 and 1647 there was a small people of Believers Baptized that did usually Assemble at Bradburn and at Orpington, in Kent, for the publique worship of God, unto whom some few in and around Speldhurst did joyne themselves. And about the yeares of o^r Lord God 1648 and 1649 they began to have like Assemblys in and about Pembury and Speldhurst, held by the assistance of William Jeffery, Pastor of the Church of Christ at Bradbourne, Nathaniel Row, and Richard Kingsnorth, from Spilshill, in Kent, and others whom the Lord was pleased to stirr up and enable.

“The names of severall Members of the Congregation that have been dealt with by the Church, Together with an account wherefore they were dealt *with-all*.

“In the year 1652 Joan Hunt was dealt with-all by the Congregation for that she in her practice did disowne the way of Trueth by ordinary heareing the Ministry of the Nation and Countenanceing and Acting in unwarrantable sports, Namely danceing, refusing to heare the Admonition of the Church, and Breaking her Promise of comeing to the Congregation.

“Concerning our Bro. John Mercer, it was reported that some time past when he was upon ye County Service a Tropper in the Militia band, that he was very much drunken and did sware, and that until such time we can receive satisfaction that either y^e Report be false, or y^t there be answerable humiliation, we cannot own him a free member nor, according to his request, Recommend him. That we do agree that there be a letter sent to him to desier him to come to our Church Meeting or to a Lord's Day Meeting that we may Receive Gospel Satisfaction in him, and so orderly Recommend him. And it is farther agreed that if he will come his charges shall be borne. The message was sent by word of mouth by Bro. Parsel.”

Apparently these accusations were hanging over John

Mercer for a long time. There is a long entry from which the following is an extract : " Wh. things in part he did own, viz., that he was strangely overtaken as being set upon on purpose, and accordingly by drinking one draught or two at most he was made drunken and forced afterwards that he knows not what he did or acted."

"Here followeth the form of the withdrawment or excommunication of Ann Barton, widdow, above mentioned, as this with ye last mentioned was publicly declared at the Lord's Day Meeting held at Bro^r Charles Marten's ye 9th of ye 1st month : ' Whereas o^r sister Ann Barton, ye widdow of ye late deceased o^r Bro^r Barton ye younger, hath wholl^e neglected our Assembly and hath turned her bake again to the public worship of ye nation, and all Admonishtion y^t hath been given her being finally Rejected, we do therefore according to Church fellowship, according to ye law of the Lord Jesus as is in case provided in the fear and name of the Lord, withdrawe from her in all things pertaineing to Church Fellowship and Communion, hereby delivering her to Sattan if happylie it may be to ye destroying of ye flesh, but ye saving of ye spirite in the day of ye Lord.' "

" At the Church Meeting held at Bro^r Hills, the 25th of ye 10th month, 1702, we do agree upon th^{es} necessary things following as being *good orders* :—

" 1. That ye disorder of peoples long and unseemly sitting by ye fier w^{ch} is provided for ye common good of ye whole Assembly, that this disorder be Reproved by ye Elder in ye spirite of Love and Meekness upon his own knowledge or upon information from others.

" 2. That ye bringing so many Children to ye meeting be Rectified and the disorder Reproved in ye spirite and upon ye same knowledge as aforesaid, yet to Remember moral necessatys are to be borne with, and that which may be managed without incumbering and disturbing ye Church ye whole or in part is to be approved of.

"3. Unseasonable sleeping in ye meeting, to the sham of ye profession and grieve of ye Brotherwood, is in any wise to be Reproved by ye Elder in ye same spirite of Meekness and Love or upon ye same knowledge of his own or information from others as aforesaid. But if any shall be found to Tollerate themselves in such practices, as by their actions appear (tho' doubtless in words they will deny it), that they may be publikly Rebuked, that they may bear their shame.

"4. That the disorder of comeing to meettings so late be amended by meetting at 10 of ye clock in ye morning and beginning ye public work at ye same hour, and those who by a continued practise be late that they be Reproved by ye Elder."

"At our Church Meeting ye 27th of ye 12th month, 1703, it being made known to the Church before, and now the Church taking into Consideration the Damage Bro^r Archer sustained in the late dreadfull and amazing high winde, his house being much hurt therewith, it was agreed the Church ought to assist him some way in the repairing thereof; and in order there to it was further agreed that there should be a colection made on that Account, and accordingly there was about 30^s gathered and given to him." *

"At our Church Meeting ye 18th of 3rd month, 1710, Bro^r Bread the accusation w^{ch} he formerly had brought against Bro^r Benge concerning his making one with his neighbours at a publick Meeting in a publike house to endevore to procure a Corporation for Tunbridge Wells, his being with ye rest of his neighbours legally concerned in consulting thereupon. For him so to do was not comely, considering ye profession of ye truth w^{ch} he made. This being in time past brought before ye Church, and his defence being heard, he was wholie acquitted of

* This is the local echo of the "great storm," one of the most terrible that ever raged in England. The devastation on land was immense; the loss sustained in London alone was calculated at £2,000,000 sterling. Trees were torn up by the roots, seventeen thousand of them in Kent alone. The Eddystone Lighthouse was destroyed, and in it perished the inventor, Winstanley, with the patrons who were with him.

any evil, but w^{ch} he now insisted upon was that whereas at ye close of ye former meetting, this thing being heard and determined, Bro^r Benge said to Bro^r Bread that he hoped to be at such a meetting again among his neighbours, and his saying was taken as an offence by Bro^r Bread, but when ye Church heard what they both said it was agreed that Bro^r Benge was clear from any blame, and Bro^r Benge said that if the word again were judged too rash he did not do it with a rash design, and if it were now to do he would not say so, and that he is sorry there was an offence taken at it."

"At our Church Meeting November ye 7th, 1721, it was agreed as followeth :—

"1. That going to horse Races, Cricketten, and playing at Cards, etc., is not to be practised nor noways to be allowed of by ye professors of ye Gospel.

"2. That both Elders and members do endeavour to inform themselves w^{ch} members do neglect to sit down at ye Lord's Table, and to show such neglectors up to their duty, and appoint one or two especially to treat with them.

"3. Agreed to be in ye practice of washing of feet before June next. Agreed to break bread next Lord's Day two weeks and to keep our former agreement to break bread once in two months after-ward."

"At our Church Meeting held at Calverly Plain October 25th, 1721, considered whereas Bro^r Coalgate was accidentally overtaken with beer, and he making an humble acknowledgement of it, it is agreed that he shall retain his Communion."

"Agreed to wash feet at this place on Fryday, ye 6th June next, and y^t Bro^r Harrison give us a sermon on ye ocation, and Bro^r Ashdoune and Chapman to provide a dinner and beer.

"Agreed to defer ye keeping of a day of fast at present till we see greater ocation on account of ye Rebellion."

Mr. Jeffery was instrumental in founding more than twenty Churches in Kent, which existed in 1738, when Mr. Crosby

wrote his history. A few then had considerable congregations. The old meeting-house at Bessell's Green is still worth a visit, and lower down the road, hidden in a private garden, is the open baptistry, which is one of the oldest in England; the original chapel was behind this spot. There were eighteen pastors during two hundred and fifty-six years. It is recorded among Mr. Jeffery's exploits that the Rev. F. Cornwell, M.A., vicar of Marden, was one of his converts. He preached a visitation sermon upon the subject at Cranbrook to a company of clergymen, who were very scandalised. They requested one of their number, a Mr. Blackwood, to reply. He studied the matter, and finally he and Mr. Cornwell became preachers among the Particular Baptists.

It is worthy of note that in the parish church at Cranbrook there is an old baptistry built for immersing. It is the only one of its kind we have seen. It is on the left side of the church against the wall, as high as an ordinary pulpit. There are steps up to it. The administrator stands by the side. We have been in it, and judge it to be about six feet deep.

The Baptists in Cranbrook and Marden gathered by Mr. Cornwell afterwards had his son Francis for their pastor, of whom Neal, in his "History of the Puritans," says that he was "one of the most learned divines that espoused the cause of the Baptists."

The Church at Wapping was formed from Mr. Jessey's congregation. It was influential under the ministry of Mr. Spilsbury, who appears to have been a leader till after the Restoration. Devonshire Square Church, one of the strongest Churches in London, can trace its history to this gathering of believers.

The Church in Bishopsgate, of which Mr. Barber was pastor, was originally composed of Anabaptists. Edwards tells an amusing story of a supposed meeting held in November, 1640, at which about eighty met to have a lovefeast and to receive "five new members lately dipped." Barber after prayer placed

both his hands on the head of each, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Afterwards "they set down to a supper prepared by a cook!" Then they had the Lord's Supper, and finally "at eleven of the clock at night they fell to a disputation as to whether Christ died for all men or no." The "supper prepared by a cook" was advocated and adopted by some Churches in order more literally to follow the primitive model of having a common meal before "the breaking of bread." Others welcomed the innovation for less spiritual considerations. They came long distances, listened to long discourses, and thought it "very necessary," as Mr. Denne wrote in 1653, "that the congregation should be refreshed before it be dismissed." This earned for them the nickname of "Leg-of-mutton Baptists."

The question "whether Christ died for all men or no" was the dividing line between all Christians of the time. The answer made them Calvinists or Arminians. General Baptists denied the Calvinistic doctrines of personal election and final perseverance, and proclaimed grace for all men, while Particular Baptists insisted upon personal election and final perseverance, to the exclusion, either by implication or in clear terms, of general redemption, *i.e.*, grace for all men. The sharpness of the controversy is seen in Luke Howard's "Looking-glass for Baptists." Mr. Howard became a Quaker and settled at Dover. He says:—"In the years 1643-4 the people called Baptists began to have an entrance into Kent; and Ann Stevens, of Canterbury, who was afterwards my wife, being the first that received them there, was dipped into the belief and Church of William Kiffin, who was of the opinion commonly called the particular election and reprobation of persons; and by him were also dipped Nicholas Woodman, of Canterbury, myself, and Mark Elfrith, of Dover, with many more, both men and women, who were all of the opinion on that particular point, and who reckoned themselves of the seven Churches in that day who gave forth a book called 'The Faith of Seven Churches,' which was then opposite to the

Baptists that held the General, as is still the same. At which time there was a great contrast between those Baptists : the General, as Lamb, Barber, and those who held the universal love of God to all, and Kiffin, Patience, Spillman [Spilsbury?], and Collyer, and those that held the particular election ; so that if any of the Particular men or women of the seven Churches aforesaid did change their opinions from the Particular to the General, that then they were to be baptised again, because, they said, ‘ you were baptised into a wrong faith, and so into another gospel,’ using that saying, ‘ If any man bring any other gospel than that which we have received, let him be accursed.’ Whereupon several denied their belief and baptism, and were baptised again into the General opinion or belief. But Nicholas Woodman aforesaid, with Mark Elfrith, with all of them in Kent, except Daniel Cox, of Canterbury, which never baptised any, held their baptism in the Particular, but changed their opinions to the General, and some to free-will and the mortality of the soul.”

Ten years later Mr. Denne visited Canterbury again, and was pressed to remain as pastor. A letter was written to the Church at Fenstanton setting out the need, and Mr. Denne, provided with “ a horse, money and necessities, and Brother Catlin to accompany him,” sallied forth to labour under the shadow of the cathedral. The Huguenots, who were in force in the city, had a regular service of their own in the crypt of the cathedral. This is still continued, and is the only instance of a free Nonconforming Church worshipping in its own part of the cathedral. Other exiles joined the Anabaptists. In 1658 Peter de la Pierre, one of their number, bought the ancient building occupied by the Black Friars in 1236 for a place of worship. It is a romantic old pile close by the river. The pulpit has a door leading to the landing of the next house, through which the preacher could get in three minutes to the fields or to the river. Every precaution against being caught by the clergy and soldiers was taken. The congregation could

leave by a secret door, cross a drawbridge, and disappear, or they could enter the boats while the soldiers were getting across the fields. There is a graveyard at the side. The old Anabaptists were absorbed by the General Baptists, who technically still own the building, though it has long since fallen into the hands of Unitarians.

How long Mr. Denne laboured in Canterbury is unknown, but we find him there at the Restoration with a considerable following. On one occasion, while worshipping secretly in the wood between Canterbury and Eythorne, Mr. Denne was surprised by the magistrate and the military. The magistrate recognised one of the company as an old servant. "What, are you here, Mary?" he exclaimed. "Well, you may go." But the brave woman replied, "I will take my lot with them," and to prison they went together.

The struggles of the Baptists who dared to proclaim their faith within sight of the cathedral which was the shrine and the home of "gay religions, full of pomp and gold," were full of romance. The Baptist pilgrims in Canterbury, who worshipped in the Real Presence in secret, must often have felt the attraction which the cathedral, with its glories of majestic architecture, mystic rites, and magnificent shows, was to all who possessed the gift of imagination. Yet they were constrained by the greater attraction of loyalty to Christ to face persecution and death.

We must turn from the cradle of English ecclesiasticism, where Laud reigned supreme, to the city of London, where Baptists very early found a home. The incumbents of the metropolis were almost all High Churchmen, though there were Puritan lecturers in the city with strong Presbyterian sympathies. These were supported by wealthy individuals, and in some places they were in great favour with the people. There were also many meetings of Nonconformists held in the halls of the city companies. Some of these were Baptist. Their preachers generally engaged in some trade or profession.

They did not serve their Churches for a fixed wage, nor did they think it right that the ministry should be a profession. One of the earliest of the Churches was that which met in Crutched Friars. John Greene, the felt hat maker, was minister in 1639. He was very popular. It is recorded that "when he preaches in Coleman Street there is so great a resort and flocking to hear him, that yards, rooms, and houses are all so full, that he causes his neighbours' conventicles and others to be oftentimes very thin, and the Independents preach to bare walls and empty seats." With Mr. Greene was closely associated Mr. Praise-God Barebones, who was famous in Fleet Street for selling good leather and preaching "sound" sermons. He had two brothers, each of whom, according to the well-known custom of the Puritans, had a Christian name made up of a sentence of Scripture or paraphrase of a text. One brother was named "Christ-came-into-the-world-to-save Barebones." The other brother had the name "If-Christ-had-not-died-thou-hadst-been-damned Barebones." Even then Fleet Street loved contractions. Both brothers were known by the last two words of their names. A pamphlet gives us a glimpse of an open-air service as seen by a violent opponent: "Greene, the felt-maker, Spenser, the horse-seller, Quartermine, the brewer's clerk, and some few others who are mighty sticklers in this new kind of teaching trade, which many ignorant coxcombs call preaching, whereunto is added the last tumult in Fleet Street raised by the disorderly preaching, prating, and prattling of Mr. Barebones, the leather-seller, and Mr. Greene, the felt-maker, on Sunday last, near Fetter Lane and in Fleet Street at the sign of the Lock and Key, there and then did you by turns unlock most delicate and strange doctrine, where were about thousands of people, of which number the most ignorant applauded your preaching, and them that understood anything derided your ignorant prating. But, after four hours' long and tedious tattling, the house where you were was beleaguered with

multitudes that thought it fit to rouse you out of your blind devotions, so that your walls were battered, your windows all fractions, torn into rattling shivers, and worse the hurly-burly might have been but that sundry constables came in strong guard to keep the peace, in which conflict your sign was broken down and unchanged." The tumult seems to have taken place outside the meeting-house in Fleet Street, which was also the leather-seller's. It is thus described: "a brief touch in memory of the fiery zeal of Mr. Barebones, a reverent unlearned leather-seller, who, with Mr. Greene, the felt-maker, were both taken preaching in a conventicle amongst a hundred persons on Sunday, the 19th of December, 1641. After my commendations, Mr. Rawbones (Barebones I should have said), in acknowledgment of your too much troubling yourselves and molesting others, I have made bold to relate briefly your last Sunday afternoon's work, lest in time your meritorious pains-taking should be forgotten (for the which you and your associate Mr. G. do well deserve to have your heads in the custody of young Gregory, to make buttons for hempen loops). You two, having the spirit so full that you must either give vent or burst, did on the Sabbath aforesaid place, all which shows had never been had Mr. Greene and Mr. Barebones been content (as they should have been) to have gone to their own parish churches. Also on the same day a mad rustic fellow did his best to raise the same strife and trouble in St. Sepulchre's Church. Consider and avoid these disorders, good reader."

Mr. Paul Hobson, who afterwards became distinguished in Cromwell's army, was a minister of this Church, and left his preaching to enlist in the Parliamentary forces. It was his custom to preach to the public on the Sunday and to make known the Gospel to the soldiers whenever he had opportunity. His name appears in the records of our Churches in Newcastle and the district, where he seems to have been successful in gathering the people together. We shall meet with him later.

Mr. Greene had entered the army earlier. There are no traces of this preacher after he became a soldier. Mr. Barebones gave his name to a parliament. Mr. Spencer was an officer, and served with distinction during the Civil Wars.

The Anabaptists laid aside their doctrine of non-resistance. Circumstances became too strong for them. The oppressions of the Star Chamber, the open violation of law in the civil courts, and the presence of spies everywhere, filled them with gloom and despair. They slowly were driven to the conclusion that the brighter day for England must be secured through force of arms. When the call came to fight for liberty, the Baptists responded without hesitation. Some of the fathers and more cautious souls stood aloof, but for the most part our men were with the Parliamentary forces. To them it was not a conflict for a particular form of government, but a fight for the birthright of each man to worship God as his conscience directed, providing he did not injure others in the exercise of that liberty.

Baptists like Roger Williams and Hanserd Knollys had already found refuge in New England. Many of the noblest men had crossed the seas to begin life again in a country they knew not rather than remain in the home land, where freedom was trodden in the mire by cleric and courtier alike. Others were prepared to follow them. It is said that Cromwell, Hampden, and Haselrig were actually on board a ship in the Thames, which, with seven others, was ready to set sail, when the royal proclamation was issued to prevent their leaving. This is open to question, but there is no doubt that George Herbert gives a true picture in the lines—

“Religion stands a-tiptoe in our land,
Ready to pass to the American strand.”

Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson, the wife of Colonel John, has told us in the memoir of her husband the condition of society at this period: “If any were grieved at the dishonour of the kingdom, or the gripping of the poor, or the unjust oppression

of the subject, . . . could not endure blasphemous oaths, ribald conversation, profane scoffs, Sabbath-breaking, and whosoever could endure a sermon, modest habit or conversation, or anything good, all these were Puritans, and if Puritans, then enemies of the King and his Government."

All sections of Nonconformists were acting for social reform. Even their bitterest opponents identified them with all who attacked abuses in the serious spirit. The Hutchinsons were brought up in the Presbyterian faith. Upon the birth of their little child they consulted a number of divines as to the meaning and manner of Scriptural baptism, with the result that they united with the Baptists. When civil war was declared, Colonel Hutchinson, though the son of a baronet, threw himself into the people's cause. His great ability was soon recognised, and after the death of Charles he became famous as the governor of Nottingham Castle. When George Fox was imprisoned for preaching at Nottingham, it was his Baptist opponent, Colonel Hutchinson, who insisted on becoming his protector. In the House of Commons, the Colonel was described as "eloquent, fearless, and powerful in debate." He was appointed one of the judges of Charles I., and for consenting to the King's death he was at the Restoration imprisoned, and died through gross ill-treatment. His memoir has kept his name fragrant through all the years. It is said to be the most charming biography of the period.

The growing temper of the people found some expression in the House of Commons. A Grand Committee was appointed consisting of the whole House to consider matters of religion. Before them came a petition from Mrs. Bastwick, and another from Mrs. Burton, on behalf of their husbands, who were close prisoners in remote islands, after having lost their ears and having been pilloried by order of the Star-chamber. A petition was presented on behalf of Mr. Prynne, a prisoner in the isle of Jersey, who had also been mutilated by order of the same authority. Another petition came from Mr. John Lilburn,

close prisoner in the Fleet. The Commons set aside the orders of the Star-chamber, and sent for the prisoners. The poor men were received with acclamations as heroes. Their mutilated heads were gazed upon with sorrow and anger. The indignation against the Church was expressed in open impeachment of the authorities. There was sympathy with heretics of all sorts, even with the Anabaptists. Fuller says, "This day, January 18th, 1640, happened the first fruits of Anabaptistical insolence, when eighty of that sect, meeting in a house in St. Saviour's, Southwark, preached that the statute in the thirty-fifth of Elizabeth for the administration of the common prayer was no good law, because made by bishops; that the King cannot make a good law because not perfectly regenerate; that he was only to be obeyed in civil matters. Being brought before the Lords, they confessed the articles, but no penalty was inflicted on them" (Fuller's "Church History," p. 172). Following on this, the House ordered Sir John Lenthall to take care of the prisoners and bring them to the bar, that all could witness against them. According to the instructions, "the Anabaptists were brought to the House, and being severally called in, all of these faithful to our Church did, like Howard and Poole, deny the most material things which they were charged with, whereupon Sir John Lenthall and the other witnesses were sworn, and did justify what they had subscribed on oath, upon which the House did order that these sectaries shall receive for this time an admonition from this House, and be enjoined hereafter to repair to their several parish churches to hear Divine service and give obedience thereto according to the Act of Parliament of this realm. To that purpose the order was read to them at this House 16th of January," and they were told that, if hereafter they should not observe these commands, they would be severely punished according to law, and so they were dismissed. Crosby thinks that these men belonged to an Independent Church. It is certain, however,

that Baptist pastors had presided over it. It may have been composed of Independents and Anabaptists. Samuel Howe and, we think, John Canne were among its pastors.

While the Commons were endeavouring to redress the injustices from which the people suffered the Lords were considering petitions of another kind. Bishop Hall called the serious attention of the Upper House to the terrible state of things in London and its suburbs, where there were "no fewer than four score congregations of several sectaries, instructed by cobblers, tailors, coatmakers, and such-like trash, which are all taught to spit in the face of their mother, the Church of England." The Bishop wisely excluded from his not over-choice sentences any reference to fishermen, tentmakers, carpenters, and "such-like trash," who figure in the New Testament rather prominently.

The old congregation at Crutched Friars was finally scattered by Dr. Benson, who was frankly described in terms which might, with equal honesty, account for the loss of attendance at other places of worship: "In learning he was not deficient, of pains to excel there was no want, all that toil could do was done, but he had not the ability of his predecessors: he was an impenetrably dull man."

The spirit of revolt at last found expression. John Pym became its voice. He was "a grave and religious gentleman," and the Commons "very much hearkened" unto one whose name was unknown to Lord Digby. "Who is that sloven?" inquired his lordship as an ungainly figure sat down after addressing the House. "That sloven," said John Hampden, "whom you see before you hath no ornament of speech—that sloven, I say, if we should ever come to a breach with the King, which God forbid, in such a case, I say, that sloven will be the greatest man in England." Oliver Cromwell was discovered, and by the turn of fortune's wheel the sloven became the Lord Protector of this country.

CHAPTER VII

BAPTISTS DURING THE CIVIL WAR AND COMMONWEALTH

DURING the Civil War Baptists were very active. They fought with the military during the week, and preached to them on Sundays. The seizure of Sir J. Hotham at Hull, in 1643, was by Sir Matthew Boynton, a declared Anabaptist, and as a result the King was denied entrance to the town. It was duly communicated to the Speaker of the Commons that Lieutenant-General Hotham "is seized upon by thirty or forty rogues of Anabaptists." In the same year, the King's forces were at Bristol, and Colonel Fiennes was tried by a council of war for surrendering to them the city. Mrs. Hazzard, or Hassard, as her name is spelt in the document, gave evidence that she "with divers other women and maydes, with the help of some men, did with woolsacks and earth stop up Froome Gate, to keep out the enemy from entering the city," and that the said women went to the governor and soldiers telling them "that if they would stand out and fight they would stand by them." Mrs. Hazzard was the woman who took John Cannes, the baptised man, into her house when he went to preach at Bristol.

With Cromwell Baptists readily took the field. There is not one instance of a Baptist taking the sword for Charles I. It has been inferred that John Bunyan fought with the "gay Cavaliers" because of his silence as to the part he played in the war. Dr. Armitage endeavours to meet this old accusation against the immortal dreamer by showing that "at this time he was not a Baptist." Happily, there need be no further discussion upon this point, as Mr. Atkinson, of the Public Records

Office, recently discovered John Bunyan's name properly entered on the pay list of the Parliamentary force at Newport Pagnell. Baptists had suffered too much to side with their oppressors. Reformation by persuasion was their ideal; reformation by force of arms was a terrible alternative. It is only fair to say that they tried all other means before they laid aside their old principles of passive resistance. Their ability and courage won Cromwell's admiration. Some of them were singled out for important positions. Cromwell's son-in-law, Fleetwood, was made Lord Deputy of Ireland; Major-General Harrison had command of the army; Major Hobson, Captain Spencer, and a host of others held important commissions. Many Baptist Churches were formed while the Parliamentary forces encamped in the district. An officer would preach and gather a few people of like mind. If they were unable to do anything more, they met for prayer and sought the assistance of other congregations. Mr. Tillam was sent to Hexham as "a messenger of one of the seven Churches in London." The Church at Cockermouth had grown sufficiently numerous in 1652 to be thinking "of branching or swarming forth into two congregations, one on the one side of Derwent and the other on the other side."

In a list of persons baptised and added to the Church at Hexham there are the names of Henry and Mary Angus, the ancestors of many honoured servants of God, whose loyalty to their denomination is beyond praise. Dr. Angus, the President of Regent's Park College and author of a considerable number of educational works, traces his descent from the family at Hexham.

At Leith a Church was formed, and Mr. Stackhouse was sent to help in the good work. A report of this little company of disciples relates the joy they felt concerning the spread of the Gospel, and asks for the prayers and assistance of other Baptists. The document bears the signature of John Carlile. The correspondence between the Churches grew into the

custom of sending round circular letters, which is still observed by county associations.

Cromwell stood for religious equality, but the nation was not sufficiently advanced to receive the doctrine. Before external restraints can be removed with safety there must be the restraining power of an educated public conscience, and the absence of this essential is clearly seen in the people generally and in the dominant Presbyterianism of the Commonwealth. The Presbyterians would have replaced one Church establishment by another, more spiritual in its form, but not less ecclesiastical and tyrannical in its nature.

The great Protector uttered brave words on behalf of liberty. When there was some question whether an Anabaptist should be employed he wrote to Major-General Crawford, "Sir, the State in choosing men to serve it takes no note of their opinions." In the same spirit he concluded his famous letter to Speaker Lenthall on the capture of Bristol: "And for brethren in things of the mind we look for no compulsion but that of light and reason." When dissolving the first Protectorate Parliament, he declared that they had fought "for a just liberty that men should not be trampled upon for their consciences. Had they not laboured but lately under the weight of persecutions, and was it fit for them to sit heavily upon others? Is it ingenuous to ask liberty and not to give it? What greater hypocrisy than for those who were oppressed by the bishops to become the greatest oppressors themselves so soon as their yoke was removed? I could wish," he added, "that they who call for liberty now also had not too much of that spirit, if the power were in their hands."

The Court of Tryers was brought into existence to prevent ungodly and ignorant persons from invading the pulpit. Before anyone was admitted to a benefice it was necessary that he should be judged and approved by the Tryers as one "able to preach the Gospel, for the grace of God in him, for his holy and unblamable conversation, as also for his knowledge

and utterance." There were thirty-nine members of the committee, and no candidate was to be rejected unless at least nine were present. The only Baptists who accepted nomination for the Tryers were Mr. John Tombes, B.D., Mr. Henry Jessey, and Mr. Daniel Dyke. Their presence was designed to bring all parties into the parish churches, and to unite the denominations in the work of licensing preachers. It is difficult to understand how they could have accepted any such position, as it was entirely at variance with their principles. The Churches very soon expressed their opinion upon the action of these brethren, and upon the Tryers and their work. A declaration was issued by certain Churches of Christ, and godly people in and about the city of London, concerning the kingly interest of Christ and the present sufferings of His cause and saints in England. In this document they say, "Is not the new Court of Tryers at Whitehall for ministers of like make with the High Commission Court? The graven image of the worldly powers creating a worldly clergie for worldly ends; highly scandalous; and against the rule of the Gospel and the Faith of Christ, and as much to be exploded as the Pope and the Prelate?" Among those who signed the declaration were fourteen members of the Church presided over by Hanserd Knollys; in addition were signatures of representatives "of those walking with Mr. Feak, Dr. Chamberlain, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Raworth, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Jessey, Mr. Barebone, Lieutenant-Colonel Fenton, and Justice Highland."

Cromwell was between two fires. The Presbyterians wished him to go further. Baxter even preached against the treason and hypocrisy of the Lord Protector. Oliver loved bravery, and invited Baxter to preach before him, which the little man did, taking for his theme "The Sin of Politicians keeping up Divisions and Sects in order that they may fish in Troubled Waters." The sermon was two hours long. Cromwell listened attentively, and at its conclusion rose to ask some questions of

the preacher. Baxter says that the Lord Protector made a long and tedious speech. It would seem that Baxter had a bad time. The Anabaptists concluded that Cromwell meant to take the crown and to establish as a matter of expediency another form of Church order. There seems some ground for the supposition. They drew up an address to his Highness the Lord Protector. It was signed by "one who wishes happiness to Cromwell as long as he does well." But it was well known to be the deliberate expression of the opinion of the Baptists who had served in the army under the Protector's leadership. It is an important document, and shows the courage of the men who had risked their lives for their conception of liberty. "Who could have thought," it begins, "when you made your 'last speech to Parliament,' when your tongue was so sweetly tipped for liberty of conscience, reproving the Parliament for having a finger on their brother's conscience, . . . you would have been so soon at the same trade?" The questions put to Cromwell are exceedingly plain. They ask no answer but to his conscience. The first is "whether your Highness had come to the outward honour and greatness you are now come to if the Anabaptists so called had been so much your enemies as they were your friends, whether the Anabaptists were ever uncharitable either to the Commonwealth in general or to your Highness in particular, and if not, then what is the reason of your intended dismissal?" They ask him to consider whether he has been fair in permitting John Biddle to be a prisoner, while he is pretending a great deal of love to the Anabaptists in the persons of Major Pack and Mr. Kiffin. With a touch of pride, they inquire whether a hundred of the old Anabaptists, such as marched under his command in "'48, '49, and '50," be not as good as two hundred of his new courtiers, if occasion should arise, and he were in condition such as they shared at Dunbar. They tell him frankly that it is no more treason to fight for their liberties under the Commonwealth than it was to take up arms against

Charles I. The concluding passage is as follows: "And therefore, oh, Cromwell, leave off thy wicked design of casting off the interest of the people of God, and let my counsel be acceptable to thee. Break off thy sins by righteousness, for it is not strength united with policy, but righteousness accompanied with strength, that must keep alive your interest with God and the people, and when these die, that is to say, righteousness and sincerity, then adieu to thy greatness here and thy eternal happiness hereafter!"

How far the action of the Baptists restrained Cromwell's ambition it is now impossible to discover. There is no reason for supposing that he was the incarnation of all the virtues. Judged by his actions and his speeches, he stands out as the greatest of the rulers of our land, but Oliver was very human, and maybe it needed the rugged words of the old Anabaptist guard to remind him of the principles for which together they had risked their lives. That he did not like their plainness of speech is evident from his coolness to their leaders and the readiness with which he gave them commissions which took them away from the seat of controversy.

Some Baptist writers have claimed John Milton for our denomination. Whether there is sufficient evidence or not, it was an honour that, as Mark Pattison says, "every Philistine levelled the contemptuous epithet of Anabaptist against Milton most freely." The poet himself wrote that he was "a member incorporate into that truth whereof I was persuaded, and whereof I had declared myself openly to be the partaker." Judged by this statement rather than Church membership—for there is no evidence that he formally joined any Church—we may claim that Milton's teaching was as his contemporaries understood it—Anabaptist.

John Milton left his poetry, and plunged deep into politics. He exchanged melody for mud. Taught by what he called "God's secretary, conscience," he laid aside the splendid isolation in which his genius created him to shine alone to mingle

with men who for the most part understood no more of him than his folly. Milton took himself seriously. A passage of his own explains him most fully. It breathes not less the sublime egotism of humanity than the egotism of the individual. He says, "For the world, I count it not as an inn, but an hospital, and a place not to live, but to die in. The world that I regard is myself. It is the microcosm of mine own frame that I cast my eye on. For the other, I use it, but like my globe, and turn it round sometimes for my recreation. Men that look upon my outside, perusing only my condition and fortunes, do err in my altitude, for I am above Atlas his shoulders. The earth is a point, not only in respect of the heavens above us, but of that heavenly and celestial part within us. That mass of flesh that circumscribes me hurts not my mind; the surface that tells the heavens they have an end cannot persuade me I have any. I take my circle to be above 360°. Though the number of the arc do measure my body, it comprehendeth not my mind. Whilst I study to find how I am a microcosm or little world, I find myself something more than the great. There is surely a piece of Divinity within us, something that was before the elements and owing no homage unto the sun. He that understandeth not thus much hath not his introduction or first lesson, and is yet to begin the alphabet of man."

The poet's mad marriage made him bitter. Some of his writings should be understood rather as a commentary upon his domestic experiences than a deliberate exposition of his opinions. Milton's great services as the intimate friend of Cromwell, Latin secretary and literary defender-in-chief to Parliament, are well known. While he stood outside the sects, perhaps too great to find a home in any community of his time, he taught the principles for which the Anabaptists suffered. Like them, he refused to be called by any name that was sectarian. He insisted upon the Scriptures being the rule of faith. They were not to be eked out "by that indigested

heap and fry of authors called antiquity" as to baptism, "wherein the bodies of believers who engage themselves to pureness of life are immersed in the running water to signify their regeneration by the Holy Spirit and their union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection." In "Paradise Lost" he wrote—

"To teach all nations what of Him they learned,
And His salvation, them who shall believe
Baptising in the profuent stream, the sign
Of washing them from guilt of sin to life,
Pure and in mind prepared, if so befall,
For death like that which the Redeemer died."

In Christian doctrine he declared "that the civil power has dominion only over the body and external faculties of man. The ecclesiastical is exercised exclusively on the faculties of the mind, which acknowledge no other jurisdiction."

Milton's widow was connected with the Baptist Church at Nantwich, in Cheshire. Samuel Creton, its pastor and "her loving friend," was one of her executors. She had watched the closing years of his life as the trials thickened round him.

Milton is a grandly pathetic figure, wrapped in an old grey coat, sunning himself at the door of his cottage by the porch, over which the honeysuckle twined, the dream of his youth destroyed, the old cause defeated, his friends gone; yet as he turns his sightless eyes to the sun he has no word of despair. There is nothing that he recalls. No offers are good enough to get him to recant. Still "his soul was like a star, and dwelt apart." He spent the evenings in reciting the lines he had composed for his poem "Paradise Lost," which another hand penned for him. In the terrible darkness he remained until he had learnt the lesson—"They also serve who only stand and wait."

Samuel Fisher, the parish priest of Lydd, gave up his living, said to be worth £200 a year, or £1,000 a year in our money, being convinced of the truth for which the Baptists stood. Some of his works had a large circulation. He was the "S. F." of pamphlet fame. He was a faithful minister, who preached

freely in the county of Kent. He seems ever ready to hold an argument or to do a kindness. When the Quaker movement quickened the life of the Churches, he became a "Friend," and won the affection of George Fox. He was the recognised leader in Kent until he died of the plague while a prisoner for conscience' sake in London.

Among the great names of the Commonwealth stands that of Thomas Harrison, who rose to be for a time commander-in-chief of the army and Cromwell's rival in public favour. At the outbreak of the war, Harrison was already impressed by the old Anabaptist dream of the kingdom of God upon the earth. He saw an opportunity to aid in its establishment, and entered the army. Under the command of Lord Essex were a number of young men of serious purpose. Essex's bodyguard became the school for officers. Fleetwood, Ludlow, Ireton, and Harrison were together. At Marston Moor Harrison so greatly distinguished himself in the cavalry charge which decided the battle, that, in recognition of his valour, Cromwell sent him to bear the tidings of the victory to the Parliament. At the final stage of the war, to Harrison was committed the duty of bringing the King a prisoner to London. On that melancholy journey Charles praised the escort given him, and drew Harrison aside in close conversation. Doubtless his Majesty uttered soft words and sweet promises, which he knew so well how to speak, but there was no response from the captain of the escort, except that he assured the King that whatsoever would be done concerning his Majesty should be done openly, and not in secret. He also promised that he himself would oppose any that should privately offer violence to his Majesty while under his care. It is something to Harrison's credit that, though he regarded the King as the representative of all the forces of evil in England, yet in his attitude toward his Majesty he united manly firmness with respect and even tenderness toward a fallen foe. At the trial and execution Major-General Harrison was much in evidence.

The conflicting theories of government were all opposed by Harrison and those who believed in what they called the Fifth Monarchy. Their aim was to establish the reign of Jesus upon the earth. Their ideal was not theirs alone. It was the noblest conception of the greatest reformers. It is not to be dismissed as a vain fancy born in a senseless brain. The Fifth Monarchy is the reign of the saints. The name is taken from the vision of Daniel recorded in the seventh chapter of the book. Four beasts are seen coming up from the storm-tossed sea. They symbolise four great world-wide monarchies, each a despotism. Based on force, terrific in their strength, these monarchies become merciless and regardless of human suffering. The vision unfolds to the seer as in perplexity he wonders whether man's inhumanity to man shall ever cease. Then suddenly the scene changes, invisible hands place a throne, and upon it the Ancient of days appears. The world-powers are overthrown. The kingdoms are taken from them and given to the saints of the Lord. In the night visions, while the great world sleeps, One comes in the clouds like unto the Son of man. Upon Him the government is conferred; His reign is to be everlasting. This is the dream of the Fifth Monarchy, perchance more than dream. No wonder that in the days of crude exposition of the prophecies, amid the excitement of civil war, this should appeal to the best and the bravest as near at hand! Harrison's sin was precipitancy. He would have accomplished by a vote of Parliament that which men can only attain through the slow evolution of Christian character. His castles in the air had no foundations upon the solid earth upon which they could rest. Yet to the men themselves this Utopia seemed rational enough. It only required that the House of Lords, already reduced to a shadow of its strength and splendour, should be swept away, and that the Commons should be elected by the "gathered Churches." These were to be the really Christian people, selected from among professing Church members. There was to be broad

toleration, a committee on religion, and an executive government composed of a small number of the wisest and best men the country contained. The rest was detail. It was simple enough, but, alas for human nature, the people were not good enough.

We have at last a worthy picture of Harrison, though by no means complete. Frank, genial, and bright, his presence was welcome to men of all classes and opinions. He was an excellent speaker, with a copious flow of words and the power of fixing the attention of his hearers on the real point at issue. But he never indulged in any of those long-winded speeches which were so prevalent among the Puritans, and whose never-ending length was so objectionable to men of action. It is no wonder that Baxter complains because he would not argue, and preferred to win success in his discourse by an appeal to high ideals.

But even these qualities, attractive though they were, would not account for the extraordinary influence over Oliver Cromwell which Harrison's career exhibits. Among the great fighters he was the man who had the most definite purpose in his fighting. He never seems to have lost sight of one grand and inspiring hope, which, vague at first, gradually took more and more definite shape in what we call the Fifth Monarchy. For this he felt he had warrant in the word of God. Nobody else, except possibly Vane, had the same definiteness of purpose; and men acknowledged that there was about Harrison a certain devotion to the great cause in which he never wavered. Here lay the secret of his greatness. He was determined to set up, if his strength allowed him, the full glories of the Fifth Monarchy. He hoped to see the saints the masters of the world, and all with one spirit consciously and confidently acting under the control of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

At first Harrison was not in favour of using force to set up the rule of the saints. He accepted the Constitution only as a

preliminary to the Fifth Monarchy, which he held the Commons should establish at once. He was at first the preacher of the movement and then its prophet. So great was his power in the army that at one time Cromwell was seriously anxious lest the army should turn him out of office and put Harrison in his place. But his influence steadily declined as he became more closely allied with the extremists. He could count upon sixty votes in the Commons, and many of the majority were inclined towards his views. The coldness of Cromwell and the growing indifference of the rank and file made him despair of setting up the reign of the Lord by means of persuasion. To the entreaties of Cromwell that he would moderate his speech he turned a deaf ear.

Vavasour Powell, the Baptist apostle of Wales, was Harrison's friend and chaplain. His influence over the character of the general was very great, and largely contributed to the loss of his power. Powell belonged to the Church militant. He was not only an army chaplain, but a captain. There are entries in the Domestic Papers—*e.g.*, that dated November 22nd, 1651—giving an account of payment to Vavasour Powell "for two months' pay of a troop of a hundred horse under Major-General Harrison in the north." They are curious reading, as they show the preacher of peace as a man of war. The action of Cromwell in becoming Lord Protector Powell regarded as a rank betrayal of the people's cause. Upon the day the Lord Protector was proclaimed with great ceremony in London Vavasour Powell and Mr. Feake were holding a meeting in Blackfriars. They made violent attacks upon the Government, and in the plainest terms denounced the ambition of the one they called the new despot. At the close of the meeting men went out and called for another revolution. There was real danger to the Commonwealth, especially as there was trouble with the Baptists in the army.

At the trial of Lilburn, who was charged with conspiracy, the Fifth Monarchy men were present in force. The Dutch

envoy, writing from Westminster, says, "There were six or seven hundred men at his trial with swords, pistols and daggers, bills and other instruments that, in case they had not cleared him, they would have employed in his defence. The joy and acclamation was so great when he was cleared that the shout was heard an English mile."

Harrison became more extreme. Powell and Feake were arrested. Cromwell tried what he could do with Harrison, but it was useless. He had set himself to establish the kingdom of God upon the earth, and he would have nothing more to do with the Lord Protector. His commission was withdrawn, and he vanished for a time from the seat of political activity. It was necessary to keep him out of the way. One of his adversaries describes him as "being carried from castle to castle through most parts of the nation." After several trials and imprisonments Powell returned to Wales, where we find him in 1655 joining with others in sending forth "a word for God, or a testimony in the truth's behalf, from several churches and divers hundreds in Wales (and some few adjacent) against the wickedness in high places, with a letter to the Lord General Cromwell." It was signed by three or four hundred persons. Cromwell's reply was an order to a troop of horse to arrest Powell. He was found at a prayer-meeting with a few country people, praying for a change in the weather. They took him away to prison, but the commander permitted him to preach on Sundays, and records that "Mr. Powell preached four very sound and excellent sermons." From this time he was a marked man, spending his days in prison or in preaching. Again in Wales, he met Mr. Thomas Edwards, of Rhual Park, near Mold. This worthy is said to have convinced him in an argument that immersion was Scriptural baptism. Promptly Mr. Powell was baptised in an open-air baptistry, which Mr. Edwards had constructed years before in his park. The result of this action was a great impetus to Baptist teaching in the Principality. Powell was an advocate of open communion,

though a decided Calvinist. He was a magnetic man, the strange product of a stormy period, equally at home in leading a forlorn hope in battle or in conducting a revival service. The religious condition of Wales was deplorable. The light, which had been kindled by that brave man John Penry in the sixteenth century, had almost been extinguished, though traditions of his heroism were preserved. He had been hanged as a common criminal at St. Thomas A-watering, Old Kent Road, on May 29th, 1593, at the early age of thirty-four. In the library of the Baptist College, Bristol, there is a MS. history of the Baptist Churches in Wales which contains a number of references to Penry, describing him as an Anabaptist. He is said to be the first to have immersed believers upon profession of faith in the district of Olchan. (See *Life of V. Powell*, p. 14.)

The memories of Penry made the work of Vavasour Powell easier. His natural eloquence and personal courage were great attractions to the people. In the glen and on the mountain slope he preached to his countrymen with intense fervour. The men took his words to their hearts as the inspired utterance of a Hebrew prophet calling them to battle against the mighty. There are still Churches whose traditions run back to these days of religious romance.

The influence of such a man upon Harrison is not hard to understand. He has been charged as a fanatic, and the charge is true; but if the names of all the fanatics were crossed off the calendar of the saints, whose names would be left? When, at the Restoration, Harrison went through the terrible ordeal of what seems like a mock trial, he gave full proof of his sanity, and before his execution he displayed evidences of his high character and genuine Christian spirit.

The majority of the Baptists were loyal to the Commonwealth. There is a letter from William Kiffin, Hanserd Knollys, and others which gives interesting evidence as to the feeling of the Baptists in England concerning the setting up

of the Fifth Monarchy by force of arms. The writers express their regret "that there is raised among you" (the Baptists in Ireland) "a spirit of great dissatisfaction and opposition against this present authority." They exhort them to think better of their determination to rise against the Commonwealth. They say, "This we are clearly satisfied in, that the principle held forth by those meeting in Blackfriars under pretence of the Fifth Monarchy for setting up the kingdom of Christ, to which many of those lately in power adhered, had it been prosecuted, would have brought as great dishonour to the name of God and shame and contempt to the whole nation as we think could have been imagined." Perhaps to this appeal is to be attributed the subsequent quiet of the Irish Baptists. A letter in Thurlow's State Papers informs us that there was no further trouble. It says, "As to your grand affairs in Ireland, especially as to the Anabaptist party, I am confident they are much misconceived in England. Upon the change of affairs here was discontent enough, but very little animosity, for certainly never yet any faction so well fortified by all the offices, military and civil, almost in the whole nation did quit their interest with more silence."

About this time the Churches began to hold annual meetings for the consideration of questions affecting their general interests. The county Associations originated in this way. We have no information of any general assembly until much later. Mr. Taylor, the historian of the General Baptists, is not very definite as to the date of their earliest assemblies. The Particular Baptist associations date from the Restoration. In the following extracts we are able to give a report of the earliest assembly held by our denomination in this country of which there is any record. The quotations are taken from a document recently found by the present writer among the Additional MSS. in the British Museum. It has not been printed before. We quote it somewhat fully, omitting the numerous passages of Scripture given as proofs of the statements.

The Assembly was held in London in July, 1656. There were present ten messengers or pastors, eight elders. After discussing the question of taking communion with persons denying the laying on of hands and the very knotty problem of "mixed" marriages, the Assembly decides: "The Church ought to behave herself to the present powers in all humility to do as they command or suffer as they inflict in matters pertaining to men, willing to obey, and in things concerning worship, if it be by them commanded contrary to God's word, to suffer meekly." This might be regarded as the old-time statement upon the question of passive resistance. There is a further decision which sheds some light upon the practice of selecting officers in the Church for reasons not quite spiritual. It is agreed, "Elders or officers unduly chosen ought to be deposed, and ye Church humbled for so choosing, and that no officer whatsoever in ye Church can by any means lay down his office, neither may any elder go from or leave one Church to go to another to officiate there except he be sent or upon special occasions sent for, and speedily to return to his charge." Perhaps this may be regarded as a mild vote of censure upon ministers who "star" the country to the neglect of their own congregations.

It is also written, "Saints ought to suffer long and very much if possible to be at peace with all men, yet when all possible means hath been used, we judge that the brethren may make use of the common law to recover their own with mercy." Upon the question of discipline it is resolved "That when any separate, if they be convicted of sin, from the Church and depart from the faith of Christ, they should be by two fit messengers appointed and sent from the Church declared against as incommunicable in things pertaining to the worship of God." The delinquents are to be admonished again, and if the second admonition should be rejected, then the Church decides that they are not to be looked upon as in fellowship; but after the three distinct proceedings they are to

be declared "offenders with all solemnity gravely and wisely at times set apart for the purpose after particular and plain discovery of their errors." This is a mild statement of the old custom of excommunicating offenders from the Church. It was called "withdrawing from the disorderly."

There is a merciful provision that, before resorting to expulsion, the members should take care to discern whether the lapse was occasioned through "weakness or not understanding the right of the business"; they then countenanced them, "if it be that we believe there ought to be forbearance." There is a long complaint that deceivers are going about the country requiring contributions for various purposes, which should not be given. This is followed by the very wise caution that persons "do not leave their proper callings and undertake such dealings as far exceed their ability to manage, by means of which it is evident many have been brought to great extremeities, they going on without the Church's assent therein, yet being in want, require the assistance of the Churches, which we do judge to be disorderly walking, and do by this declare our dislike of such practices, and are resolved not to send assistance to persons so walking."

The Church's determination to help its members in distress is shown by the following: "That when any member of a congregation shall be in want, judged by them to be an object of pity, and themselves not able without some great and more than ordinary disabling of themselves to communicate to his want, that they then shall send a sufficient testimony to the next congregation by a messenger appointed for that purpose that is known, except there be a letter sent subscribed with such hands as may be certainly known to that congregation, and so that congregation to the next, and so to as many as that congregation whom the person in want belongs unto shall think fit, in which time the person in want may follow his avocation and not bring himself in greater extremity by his going up and down and neglecting his calling."

The document bears the signature of William Jeffery, Matthew Caffyn, Clement Lander, Benjamin Morley, Thomas Moncke, John Hartnoll, Joseph Wright, John Miller, Abraham Pinkhorn, John Wheeler and elders, John Griffith, Thomas Parrott, John Wood, William Spence, Thomas Clerke, George Hamon, Leonard Hadock, Nicholas Crosse.

There was a migratory congregation of General Baptists meeting along the Kentish coast from Dover to Dungeness, and along the border of Kent and Sussex. Almost every other village had its Baptist congregation. The liberty enjoyed was not conferred by law, but toleration. The Churches multiplied throughout the land. In London the congregations were both influential and numerous, particularly within the confines of the City.

Some Baptists were induced to accept livings in the State Church. They were licensed and inducted by the Tryers. Their position was altogether inconsistent from our point of view. They preached in the parish churches and received the emoluments belonging to the office. They seemed to have gathered separate Baptist Churches in private houses and to have used the parish churches only as preaching stations. They tried the scheme of comprehension, which now finds favour with some few Nonconformists, who are not very familiar with the history of their own principles. It was a hopeless failure. When we advocate the endowment and State support of all theologies we show clearly that we have ceased to believe in any one of them. The Baptist "Black List" of ministers who accepted livings is much smaller than might have been expected. Ivimey gives twenty-six names in all, but a careful examination shows that at least five of these did not become Baptists until after their ejection in 1662, and some others, like Mr. Baker, who is said to have been Baptist vicar of Folkestone, can only be identified with our denomination by a liberal use of the imagination. But when all has been written by way of mitigation, it is a mystery how

Captain Paul Hobson could become State-paid chaplain to Eton College, or that George Fownes, M.A., who afterwards was pastor of the Church at Broadmead, could be a vicar. As Mr. Ivimey quaintly says, "it is rather wonderful that any Baptists were found in the Churches at this time." In Wales there were several who, like Mr. Vavasour Powell, had been licensed by the "Tryers" and were paid by the State.

In Sussex Mr. Caffyn was "cried up" by the General Baptists as their "battle-axe and weapon of war." He was victor in almost countless controversies upon the village green and in the parish churches. The rule of the Puritans was doomed when Cromwell died, but it lasted long enough to give a new direction to English history and a new meaning to the religion of personal responsibility. Whatever may be said of the extravagances of Puritanism—and there is very much that can still be said upon that subject—the fact remains that the noblest English ideals of manhood came not from the cleric or the Cavalier, but from the Puritan.

CHAPTER VIII

BAPTIST LIFE FROM THE RESTORATION TO THE REVOLUTION

GENERAL MONK carefully weeded his forces of Baptists before he attempted to bring Charles Stuart to the throne. The failure of Cromwell's son, Richard, to maintain a strong government made the task of the traitor comparatively easy. Charles sent forth his famous declaration from Breda, in which he promises liberty to tender consciences, and that "no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom."

The merry monarch came to England amid great rejoicing. His first Sunday was spent in Canterbury, and the old service was resumed in the cathedral. The only disturbance was that in London caused by a band of men led by Venner, a wine cooper who preached the Fifth Monarchy. He was a wild enthusiast who on the Sunday led forth from the meeting-house in Coleman Street a company determined to destroy the new government. They put to flight some musketeers who were sent to disperse them. The Lord Mayor, however, succeeded in driving them to Highgate, but on the Wednesday they returned to the city, and beat the Life Guards and a whole regiment, but were finally overcome. Venner was executed, and peace was restored. Many Baptists who knew nothing of this street disturbance were arrested upon the flimsiest charges of complicity in some unknown conspiracy to restore the old order. The General Baptists presented a petition to his Majesty in which they declared they were still resolved to suffer persecution and the loss of their goods and



THE BUNYAN STATUE AT BEDFORD.

even life itself, rather than depart from their faith. This document was accompanied by a confession of faith signed by forty-one persons, who were said to represent more than twenty thousand others. They were soon put to the test. The old spirit of persecution was revived. An Act was passed for the attainder of several persons guilty of the horrid murder of "his late sacred Majesty Charles I." Major-General Harrison was executed at Charing Cross. His heart was shown to the people amid a mad scene of degrading brutality.

The way in which Baptists were dealt with is illustrated in the case of Mr. James, a Baptist who believed in keeping the Saturday Sabbath. He was assembled with a small company in Whitechapel. It was the afternoon of October 19th. The service had commenced. Mr. James was preaching the Gospel, when a justice of the peace entered to disperse the assembly. He ordered Mr. James to cease preaching, which the little man promptly declined to do. He then had him taken from the pulpit, and conveyed to Newgate. He was charged with having used seditious language in his sermon, but he denied the charge in the most explicit terms, and it was contradicted by those who heard the discourse, yet he was fully committed to take his trial. In November Mr. James appeared in the dock. He pleaded "not guilty," and was again remanded. Afterwards a verdict was given against him upon the evidence of profligate persons who were not present at the service. Mr. James bore himself with dignity. At the close of the trial he said, "There are two or three Scriptures I would like to leave with you. One is, 'As for me, do as seemeth good unto you, but know ye for certain that if ye put me to death ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves'; another is, 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints'; and the last is, 'He that toucheth the Lord's people toucheth the apple of His eye.' I have no more to say for myself, but one word for my Lord, and I have done. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is King of England." The

rest of the sentence was drowned by the interruption of the court. Mr. James was condemned "to be hanged, drawn, and quartered." His wife besought the King, but his Majesty seemed to treat her intercession as a good joke. In November Mr. James was brought to the scaffold, where he addressed the crowd, telling them that he was a baptised believer, holding the principles of Christ's doctrine and endeavouring to keep the commandments. When he had finished, the executioner said, "The Lord receive your soul, sir," to which he replied, "I thank thee," and added, "Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit." Immediately after his body, separated into parts, was affixed to the gates of the city, and his head set upon a pole by the meeting-place where with his people he had worshipped God in peace.

The clerical authorities soon began to safeguard their position by destroying the liberties of their opponents. The Conventicle Act was revived. By this all meetings for religious worship other than prescribed by the Common Prayer attended by more than five persons were made illegal, and those taking part in them were punishable by fine, imprisonment, and transportation. To this was added the infamous Five Mile Act. Under this Act clergymen who had been silenced by the Act of Uniformity and other persons not ordained by the State Church to preach, if found upon the road within five miles of any market town for the purpose of preaching, were heavily punished. Mr. Ewins, the minister of Broadmead, Bristol, was committed to prison, but he found an ingenious device by which he continued his preaching. He stood by the grating in the wall while the people gathered outside. He would speak so that they could hear. The rumour says, "He being four pair of stairs high from them, had so to shout that when he came out of prison he fainted away, and declined continually, that it hastened his days."

One of the first to suffer for preaching was John Bunyan. He had gone to conduct a service in the village near his

home. Mr. Francis Wingate, justice of the peace, knowing that the meeting was to be held, issued a warrant to arrest the preacher, who was duly brought before the magistrate and the vicar. The statutes which authorised the warrant were passed in Elizabeth's reign. Bunyan was sent to the gaol at Bedford, and from that time became a prominent figure in the history of Nonconformity. After three months in gaol a messenger was sent to inquire whether Bunyan would undertake not to preach if he were liberated. This he declined, declaring that he would submit to the authorities as the Scripture commanded. He says, "Where I cannot obey actively, then I am willing to lie down, and to suffer what they shall do to me." Bunyan had been brought to the truth mainly by ex-Major Gifford, who baptised him, and received him into the Church. "Gifford did much," says Bunyan, "for my stability. He would bid us take special heed that we took not up any truth upon trust."

The life of the immortal dreamer is so well known that there would be no excuse even for a brief sketch of his career, especially after the work of Mr. Froude and Mark Rutherford, but no story of the Baptists would be complete that omitted the greatest literary genius of their ministry. "He is not altogether a representative of Puritanism, but the historian of 'Man's Soul.'" How well he knew the Scriptures may be seen from the fact that in the first three hundred words of his "Relation of the Imprisonment," excluding proper names, there are only five words which are not in the Authorised Version of the Bible. As a preacher he became a great force. Three thousand persons have been collected in Southwark before breakfast to hear him preach even at one day's notice. It is said that Charles II. once asked Dr. Owen how he, with so much learning, could hear a tinker preach, to which the Doctor replied, "May it please your Majesty, had I the tinker's ability for preaching, I would most gladly relinquish all my learning." Bunyan, though a very decided Calvinist, preached

grace abounding to the chief of sinners. He was continually pressing the plan of salvation, and many who listened to his words thanked God for the message which changed their lives. Mr. Froude describes him as "the poet apostle of the English middle classes, imperfectly educated like himself." He was imperfectly educated as Shakespeare was imperfectly educated, but his name is known where his less imperfectly educated biographer is as a heathen stranger. His genius transcends the standards of the schools. He has been aptly declared the poet of Protestantism, just as Dante was the poet of Catholicism. In 1672 John Bunyan became pastor of the Church at Bedford. He was the most famous minister of the period. The few sermons we have show that he could speak as well as write Bible English, and perhaps no greater tribute could be given to a preacher. He knew wisely how to take humour's bow, and tip his arrows with satire when it pleased him. So great was his success that the largest public buildings were not big enough to hold those who wished to hear him when he visited the metropolis. His tenderness to his wife became a proverb. Sometimes when he was in prison she with her four children, one of them blind, would pray for his release, and afterwards beseech the authorities to give him liberty, though, she says with childlike honesty, "he dare not leave off preaching so long as he could speak." From the prison he wrote, "The parting with my wife and four children hath often been to me in this place as the pulling off my flesh from my bones, and that not only because I am too, too fond of these great mercies, but also because I should have often brought to my mind the hardships, miseries, and want my poor family was like to meet with, should I be taken from them, especially my poor blind child, who lay nearer my heart than all I had besides. 'Poor child!' thought I; 'what sorrow art thou like to have for thy portion in this world! Thou must be beaten, suffer hunger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities, though I cannot now endure that the wind should

blow on thee, but yet though I must venture all with God, though it goeth to the quick to leave you, I was as a man who was pulling down his house upon the head of his wife and children, yet thought I, I must do it ! I must do it ! ”

John Bunyan was not much of a denominationalist. He believed in open Communion, and adopted the Anabaptists' view that disciples should not be called by sectarian names.

Gifford, Bunyan's pastor, was a remarkable man. In 1648, he was an officer in the King's army ; taken prisoner after the battle of Maidstone, he was condemned to death. His sister visited him, and devised a plan to save him. For three days he was lying hidden in the bottom of a ditch, until he could get away to London, and then to Bedford. At this time he led a wild life, but was brought to God through the reading of one of Mr. Bolton's books. In 1650, he was the chosen pastor of the godly people meeting round Bedford. He died in 1655, before his famous convert became an author or a preacher. The name of Gifford is famous in Baptist history. For three generations there was a Gifford in the ministry. Andrew was pastor at Bristol, in 1661, when persecution was doing its worst. Sometimes, in the middle of a sermon, the mayor and officials entered and commanded him to stop, which he declined to do. They then complained and sat down attentively to listen to the discourse, taking him at the close to the Council Chamber. They gave him a soft reproof, then cautioned and dismissed him. He was several times imprisoned, and barely escaped execution for the part he took in the Monmouth Rebellion. His grandson, Andrew, formed the church in Eagle Street, which now worships in the beautiful little chapel by the Baptist Church-house.

The King made a request that Mr. Kiffin and his friends would lend him £40,000. Such a sign of the Royal favour was little short of a command. Mr. Kiffin sent a reply, that “ he could not possibly lend his Majesty so large a sum, but if his Majesty would honour him by accepting as a gift

£10,000, it was very much at his Majesty's service." The King was quite willing to take the money. Mr. Kiffin used to say that he had saved £30,000 by that act of liberality. The policy of the King was to force Nonconformists to agitate for toleration for all sects, Catholic as well as Protestant, in order that he might have an excuse to restore the Roman Catholic Church to which he belonged, if so profligate a person can in any true sense be said to have belonged to any Church. The Baptists were for toleration, but they had suffered so much from the Papacy that they chose rather to bear persecution than gain their freedom by the restoration of Catholics to civil power, and perhaps political ascendancy.

Clauses were added to the disgraceful Conventicle Act in 1670, which made it the law of the land that preaching in any Conventicle should be punished by a fine of £20 for the first offence, and £40 for the second. Any person who knowingly permitted worship to be held in his house or premises otherwise than according to the Book of Common Prayer, was to be fined £20. The fines were recoverable by distraint upon the offenders' goods. The money was to be divided between the King, the poor, and the informer. Under this law Baptists suffered the spoiling of their goods, and the loss of liberty. The way in which the people passively resisted is described in an old pamphlet relating to the county of Bedford. With a few alterations the narrative might pass as a report of some high-handed proceedings in out-of-the-way villages to recover that part of the education rate which covers the cost of sectarian instruction, which the authorities find it difficult to obtain.

We give two illustrations. A little company of worshippers were surprised, and the fines were imposed. Thomas Battison, the churchwarden, set out to collect them. By distraint upon the goods of "John Burdolf, a maltster, who having sold all his malt before the Act commenced, and delivered his malt and malthouse into the possession to whom he had sold them, none of the officers would join Battison to break open the door, or

to distrain the malt, though, while Battison and the other officers were debating in the open yard before the malthouse door, a great number of all sorts of persons gathered about them expressing by turns their indignation against him for attempting this against Burdolf, whom the whole town knew to be a just and harmless man. The common sort of people covertly fixing a calf's tail to Battison's back, and deriding him with shouts and halloes, he departed without taking any distress there." The next call was made at Edward Covington's shop to distrain for five shillings because his wife had attended the service, but "none of the officers would distrain but Battison, who took a brass kettle, but when he brought it to the street door, none of the officers would carry it away; neither could he hire any one to do it in two hours' time, though he offered money to such needy persons among the company as wanted bread. At last he got a youth, for sixpence, to carry the kettle less than a stone's throw to an inn yard, where he had before hired a room to lodge such goods under pretence to lodge grain; but when the youth carried the kettle to the inn gate, being hooted at all the way by the common spectators, the inn-keeper would not suffer the kettle to be brought into his yard; so his man set it out in the middle of the street, none regarding it, till towards night a poor woman who received alms was caused by the overseer to carry it away."

The authorities were determined to suppress the unauthorised meetings for worship. Mr. Battison obtained the assistance of a file of soldiers, and set out again to collect the fines, but the people were not soon overcome. Many of the shopkeepers were out of the town, and their premises locked up. The method of the representatives of the Church is shown by the pamphleteer, "The first distrain was attempted upon the goods of one Nicholas Hawkins, a cutler, who was fined four shillings, but his goods being removed beforehand, and his house visited with the small-pox, the officers declined entering."

Some were fined for not being at church, others for asking who accused them. Mr. Ivimy says that the names of those who suffered are on the records of the Bedford Church. On the roll of these heroes who contended for the right to worship as conscience determined are the names of Michael Shephard; Thomas Honeylove, a shoemaker; John Croker, a draper; Dan Rich, a tanner; John Spencer, a grocer; Robert Brown, a gardener, whose entire home was taken for a fine of £3; and, not least, Mrs. Mary Tilney, a gentlewoman of good family. To make an example, the overseer took all her goods, even to the hangings of the room, with the beds and the sheets.

As the fines failed to silence Nonconformity, sterner measures were adopted. Many Baptists were imprisoned. Mr. Delaune issued a harmless tract, entitled "A Plea for the Nonconformists," for which he was carried off to Newgate. Delaune was a Baptist schoolmaster. The quality of his writing may be gathered from the opinion of Daniel Defoe, that past master in the art of pamphlet composition. He says of "A Plea for the Nonconformists," "if any man ask what we can say why the Dissenters differ from the Church of England, and what they can plead for it, I can recommend no better reply than this. Let them answer, in short, Thomas Delaune, and desire the querist to read the book." He adds, "I am sorry to say, he is one of near 8,000 Protestant Dissenters who perished in prison in the days of that merciful Prince, Charles II., and that merely for dissenting from the Church, in points which they could give such reasons for as this plea assigns; and for no other cause were stifled, I had almost said murdered, in gaols for their religion, in the days of those gentlemen's power who pretend to abhor persecution." Mr. Bamfield, Mr. Ralphson, and many other Baptists like poor Delaune, died in the loathsome prison. Their end was peace, not even the prison could quench their faith. How different was the death of the King who had played the persecutor to serve his own vile ends!

Green tells us that, "When the profligate monarch was

stricken with death, the bishops around his bed fell on their knees and implored his blessing, and Charles with outstretched hands solemnly gave it to them. But while his subjects were praying, and his bishops seeking a blessing, the one anxiety of the King was to die reconciled to the Catholic Church. When his chamber was cleared, a priest named Huddleston received his confession, and administered the last sacrament. The merry monarch died as he had lived, courageous, cynical, and corrupt."

The Baptists had little consideration from Charles II. They took no part in the comedy described as the Savoy Conference. The brutality with which they were treated was only exceeded by the conduct of the authorities towards the Quakers. The prisons were filled by the noblest of the citizens who declined to obey the unjust laws. When toleration was given as an Act of Indulgence by James II., Baptists who valued civil liberty so highly took the side of those who declared that the King in his action had exceeded his legitimate power. It seems strange that men brought from prison after years of suffering should immediately use their liberty to attack the one to whose action they owed their freedom, but they had learned that if a King were permitted to act beyond the power which the Constitution conferred, there was an end to their liberty. The places in which Baptists were permitted to preach tell a curious and pathetic story. The distribution of the Baptists is curiously local. Taking the London and the western districts as wholes, the percentage of Baptist Churches does not, indeed, strikingly differ from the percentage of Presbyterian Churches in the same districts, being about 19 and 16 per cent. respectively, but the numbers are distributed very differently. In the former district no fewer than twenty-four out of thirty-eight are in Kent, which is the only county in which they are more numerous than the other denominations; while in the latter twenty-two out of thirty-three are in Somerset. In Kent, again, more than half belong to a small district in the

south-west, extending from what is now the line of railway from Headcorn to Ashford to the Sussex boundary, where nearly every village had a Baptist minister and meeting-place. In like manner, in Somerset, fifteen out of the twenty-two places licensed were situated in a strip along the Mendips, from Axbridge in the west to Frome, Kilmington, and Wincanton in the east. The strong Baptist district in the west was, however, not the four western counties, but Somerset, Wiltshire and Dorset, which three counties contained nearly a quarter of the Baptist ministers. The other region where they were strong was Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire, where they numbered forty. Thus in the six counties of Kent, Somerset, Lincolnshire, Wiltshire, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire, one hundred and three ministers were licensed, being one more than half of the total number in England and Wales. In the six northern counties they had but two representatives in Yorkshire, and but one in Lancashire, while seven other counties had none, and five only one apiece. In Wales, there were but five, distributed over four counties. A peculiarity of their organisation was that in numerous instances two or more ministers were licensed for the same place. For instance, in Somerset, Ashbrittle had three, and Bridgewater, Frome, and North Perrot two each. The places licensed were for the most part dwelling-houses, but barns, outhouses, lofts, kiln-houses and malt-houses appear in the lists.

The Churches in Kent owed much to the zeal of Captain Taverner, who had been appointed governor of Deal Castle by Cromwell. While attending to his duties he became friendly with Mr. Prescott, the General Baptist minister, in 1663. He was baptised at Sandwich, and joined the Church at Dover. Two years later, he resigned his commission, which had been continued to him at the Restoration, and began business as a grocer in Dover. He united with the Baptists, and became an elder. He visited Baptists all round the coasts, stirring up their zeal for the spread of their principles. The Churches

become strong enough to divide, Dover had Mr. Taverner and Mr. Cannon as pastors. The Church at Sandwich and Deal had two elders, while the church at Folkestone and Hythe was under the care of elders Author and Adlow. The May meetings probably originated with the Baptists in Kent. It was their custom to meet once a year on the first Sunday in May to commemorate their common union and cultivate a good understanding. These meetings were maintained for over fifty years.

Another name which stands out prominently is that of Benjamin Keach. Converted at fifteen he united with the Church near his home in Buckinghamshire. Before he was twenty he had been in prison for preaching. At the age of twenty-four he published "The Child's Instructor." For this very elementary and harmless school book he was indicted, and brought to trial before Lord Chief Justice Hyde, afterwards Lord Clarendon, who instructed the jury to return a verdict of "guilty." Mr. Keach was sentenced to be imprisoned for a fortnight, and then to spend the next Saturday in the pillory at Aylesbury in the open market till one o'clock with a paper on his head bearing this inscription, "For writing, printing and publishing a schismatical book." The next Thursday he was to spend in the same manner at Winslow, then to have his book burnt by the common hangman. He was also to pay a fine of £20, and to remain in gaol until he could find securities for good behaviour, and lastly to renounce his doctrines, and make such public submission as should be required. "I shall never renounce," said Keach to his worship, "the truth I have written in that book." The sentence was only partly carried out. In 1668, Mr. Keach was called to be the pastor of a particular Baptist Church meeting in a private house in Horseley Down, London. Up to this time Baptists did not sing in their public worship. There had been good reasons for their silence. The sound would have told the informers where they were assembled. Mr. Keach was the first minister who

introduced singing into a London Baptist church. It was decided that a hymn should be sung after the Communion, but even this was the cause of considerable controversy, and for several years there was discussion whether the Baptists should be a songless community. Mr. Keach, who was a voluminous writer, published "The Breach Repaired in God's worship; or singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs proved to be a holy ordinance of Jesus Christ." The good man must have been almost destitute of the saving grace of humour, for he proceeds with great solemnity to show that there are various kinds of voices or noises, a shouting noise, a crying noise, a preaching voice, a praying voice, and, lastly, a singing voice. "All these," says sober Mr. Keach, "are distinct from one another. Singing, he says, is not heart singing or mental singing, but a musical, melodious modulation or tuning of the voice. It is always performed with the voice, and cannot be done without the tongue."

Some of the Baptists discovered new uses for singing psalms. In Bristol, during the persecution, it was arranged that women should sit upon the stairs of the meeting-place, so that strangers could not get quickly into the room where the preacher was, and round him a number of men stood, who pitched the tune as soon as a scuffle was heard upon the stairs; they sang deliberately until the magistrate or the informer came into the room to discover that there was no leader to arrest. In Brother Gifford's meeting, where singing was excluded, there was a trap-door in the floor, on which the preacher stood surrounded by a company of tall brethren. When the signal was given that a stranger was at the door, the preacher was let down to the room below, while the tall brethren awaited the appearance of the new comer.

One of the ablest of the general Baptist ministers was Mr. Grantham. In his book of "Primitive Christianity" he has a chapter on the duty of thanksgiving which indicates Baptist opinion of the day. He undertakes to show four things. First,

that the psalms and hymns put forth in public worship are to be sung there by such as God hath fitted thereto by the help of His Spirit. That the matter of those psalms is to accord with the psalms and hymns in the Scripture. Probably it was as difficult then as it would be now to discover the Scriptural justification for the teaching of some of the hymns the people like to sing. Mr. Grantham, therefore, showed that "the Primitive Church had no other manner of singing than such as edified the Church by understanding the voice of the singer," and that "the formalities now used generally in singing psalms differ greatly from that which God ordained for worship." Mr. Grantham did not like "the confused singing," by which it appears he describes singing according to music. He thinks that in the noise of "confused singing" music may please the ear, but none can be edified.

Isaac Marlow enters the arena with a treatise, entitled, "The Truth Soberly Defended." He complains of the way in which pure worship in the churches is being destroyed by singing. The controversy waged merrily until Mr. Keach took the vote of the Church upon the matter. He secured a majority, but, says Marlow, "a major vote is no proof of truth." The Church in Horseley Down divided. The singers went with Mr. Keach. Those who preferred silence formed themselves into another community, and established the Church at Mazepond, where they continued to adhere to the principle upon which they had separated till after the death of their second minister, Mr. Edwin Wallen; but their next pastor, Mr. West, in 1739, made it a condition of his accepting the pastoral office that singing should be introduced into public worship. At the Assembly of the Churches, held in 1692, the struggles for permission to sing were still raging. The question was remitted to a small committee. The cautious fathers decided that "both sides erred;" they therefore asked that the most violent of the pamphlets, which they named, should be brought into the Assembly and left there, that no Church member should buy

or circulate them ; but the question, " to sing or not to sing," they left to the decision of each Church.

A new device for raising money was found in electing Baptists and other Nonconformists to civic offices which the law prevented them from holding unless they conformed to the State Church. When the good men pleaded inability or declined to serve they were fined. By this means large sums of money were secured for Corporation purposes. Mr. Kiffin was set down an Alderman of the City. The King was ready to honour the wealthy Baptist, but in an interview Mr. Kiffin reminded his Majesty that his two young grandsons, Benjamin and William Hewling, had been cruelly condemned to death by the butcher Jeffreys for their part in the Monmouth rising. The old man declined the proffered honour, and as the tears ran down his cheeks, he said, " Sire, the death of my grandsons gave a wound to my heart which is still bleeding, and will never close but in the grave."

The story of Mrs. Elizabeth Gaunt is told by Bishop Burnet. " There was in London one Gaunt, a woman that was an Anabaptist, who spent a great part of her life in acts of charity, visiting the gaols, and looking after the poor of what persuasion soever they were. One of the rebels found her out, and she harboured him in her house, and was looking for an occasion of sending him out of the kingdom. He went about in the night, and came to hear what the King had said. (James had declared that he would rather pardon the rebels than those who concealed them.) So he by an unheard of baseness went and delivered himself, and accused her that she had harboured him. She was seized and tried. The only witness to prove that she knew the person to be a rebel was himself. She was condemned to be burnt. She said, " Charity was a part of her religion, as well as faith, and as she had fed an enemy, she hoped to receive reward of Him for Whose sake the deed was done." At Tyburn she stood at the stake, pulling the straw nearer that she might die with less lingering. The people

were greatly moved by the good woman's calm cheerfulness. She arranged the pile for her burning as she might have made her bed for a night's sleep. Mr. Keach has borne witness in some poor doggerel to Mrs. Gaunt's zeal in good works. Her death did much to intensify the people's distrust of the Roman Catholic King who had no scruples in being the supreme head of the Protestant Church. Again James tried to bribe the men whose spirit he could not break. To some he showed signs of royal favour; permission was granted to reopen all conventicles. An address of humble thanks was presented to his Majesty, but only eight ministers could be induced to sign it, and three of them are unknown men.

The disused chapels were again opened, but the King could not remove the popular impression that his favour to Nonconformity was only a bribe in order to restore Popery.

William of Orange landed at Torbay. The news was received with such open manifestations of pleasure by the people that King James and his priests lost their heads as well as their heart. The "Mass-houses" were laid in ruins by the mob. Jeffreys was committed to the Tower, where he died in fear. The King fled to France. The throne was declared vacant, and William proclaimed King.

CHAPTER IX

BAPTIST ORATORS AND ORGANISATIONS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THERE are still existing one hundred and twenty-two Baptist Churches, which were carrying on their ministry when William III. came to the throne. Bishop Burnet says of their pastors that "they were men of virtue and of universal charity," though he describes the clergy of his own time as lifeless; he says, "instead of animating, they seem rather to lay one another to sleep." William desired to give a broad measure of religious liberty. In 1689 he urged Parliament to abolish the Test and Corporation Acts, and offered, if this were done, that he would not exact the Oath of Allegiance from Bishops and clergy already in office; but against the proposal there arose a great outcry. The Archbishop, seven Bishops, and four hundred clergy declared that they would never agree. Some of them were men of gentle and noble character, but they regarded religious freedom as a state of anarchy.

William Kiffin, Hanserd Knollys and others still preached in London. They were old men who had been left behind by the advance of time. The general Baptist Churches generally were in a declining state. Most of them were occupied in vain attempts to define the doctrine of the Trinity. Mr. Caffyn became the leader of a strong party of Higher Critics. He was a man of great ability and considerable education. His tendencies were towards a liberal theology, in some particulars so liberal that it might be described as rationalistic. The controversy raged in the Assembly. The advance party became Unitarian, and formed a separate association. Attempts were

made by the orthodox leaders to get an authoritative creed, which would be acceptable to both sides ; but it was impossible. Some of their own party insisted that there was no Scriptural warrant for making creeds, which could be used as tests of belief. While attention was centred in doubtful disputations the light of true godliness burned dim. Many of the Churches dwindled, not a few of them died out altogether. Some of their buildings and endowments still remain, but in almost every instance they are deserted tombs in which a noble faith long ago was buried. Mr. Dan Taylor was asked to state his views as to the causes of the decline in the life of the Churches. He summed up the matter in a sentence ; he wrote, "They degraded Jesus Christ and He degraded them."

The Association letters during many years are characterised by two permanent features—discussion over creeds, and deploring the decay in the character of the Churches. All denominations seem to have passed under a cloud during this period. It has been said that "never has a century risen on Christian England so void of soul and faith." It reached its misty noon beneath the second George ; a dewless night was succeeded by a dewless dawn. There was no freshness in the past, and no promise in the future. The Puritans were buried, and the Methodists were not born. Yet there was some light before Wesley came in the glorious dawn. Among the advanced party, Dr. John Gale was conspicuous for his sweet character and high literary culture. Dr. Gale was educated at Leyden. When he was nineteen he held the degrees of Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy. After spending some time in Amsterdam he came to the Barbican church in London. At first he was strongly Calvinistic, but his views broadened until he was recognised as the leader of the advanced school. The position he held among scholars may be gathered from a published oration in Latin by Professor Volder, in which he describes Dr. Gale as one who often spoke on public occasions in Latin with "elegance, propriety and force of persuasion."

He was also able to declaim in Greek. It was the custom of a group of eminent men to exchange views upon subjects of common interest. Happily, scholarship is not sectarian. Dr Gale wrote a letter upon the practice of Baptism as described by the early fathers. Mr. Whiston was so interested that he sent it to his friend, Sir Isaac Newton, asking for an opinion. He says, "The answer was that Sir Isaac was heartily for the Baptists."

Dr. Gale took keen interest in the affairs of the day, and was ready to give his great influence to any cause likely to aid men to live righteously in this present world. Though continually in controversy, "he possessed an even temper which discovered itself in the constant serenity of his countenance." It was often within his power to secure positions which would have placed him beyond anxiety concerning the daily bread for his household, but he declined all overtures which in any way involved compromise with principle. He was so busy helping others that he had no time to advance his own interests. He was one of the few men who have been brave enough to unite in their own lives high thinking with lowly living, and thus to give an object-lesson never more needed than in our ease-loving times. Dr. Gale's method was clear and cold. Like most of his contemporaries, he feared emotion, and restricted his preaching to the realm of ethics.

He had the most influential congregation in the City; the principal scholars of the day were his friends or acquaintances. With Mr. Whiston, he formed a group of scholars to examine the works of the early fathers.

At this time there were friendly meetings of Churches now described as Associations. The Midland Churches met in this way as early as 1655. The London Assembly or Association was formed in 1704 by the representatives of fourteen Churches. One of its first acts, however, was to pass a condemnation of Mr. Caffyn's views concerning the Trinity. More useful resolutions were passed recommending the Churches to assist

necessitous pastors, and to further the spread of good literature. There was an important proposal to constitute a special fund for the better education of ministers, but the ultra-independence and differences in doctrine made corporate action very feeble and ineffective in the Churches of the time. The Moderator of this Assembly was Mr. Joseph Stennett, pastor of the Seventh Day Baptists meeting at Pinner's Hall. He was a poet and an author of distinction. Mr. Stennett, "although belonging to a religious body which was assumed to neglect human learning, was one of the greatest scholars who at that time adorned the pulpits of the Free Churches in the Metropolis. His acquaintance with Hebrew and historical literature was almost unrivalled." He published some French translations. Tate, the Poet Laureate, praised his hymns, and Archbishop Sharp urged him to undertake a revision of the English Psalms. So great was Mr. Stennett's influence, that upon one occasion two peers were deputed to interview him in order that he might use his influence with the London Churches to give an expression of approval to the acts of the Government. They assured him that such action upon his part as they suggested would meet with the warm approbation of his Majesty, and any reasonable favour would be granted as a mark of the Royal approval. Mr. Stennett's reply was very simple. He bade the deputation "Good morning," and opened the door. His son, another Joseph, was pastor of the church at Exeter, before entering on the ministry at Little Wild Street. The Duke of Cumberland sent his name to the University of Edinburgh with a recommendation for the degree of Doctor of Divinity, which was granted. Several distinguished members of Parliament were among his friends. He is said to have had great influence with the Lord Chancellor. There was a third Joseph, the grandson of the first. He also became a Baptist pastor, and his brother Samuel joined the Church of his fathers. For several years he was preacher at Wild Street. He was eminent for his scholarship. Aberdeen made him Doctor of Divinity.

In his congregation there sat Dr. Evans, who afterwards became President of the College at Bristol, Joseph Hughes, who founded the British and Foreign Bible Society, and John Howard, the philanthropist. Howard wrote to Mr. Stennett, expressing his agreement with his doctrine, and his pleasant memories of the services he had attended.

London ministers were accustomed to meet in coffeehouses to discuss the affairs of the denomination and questions of the day. Many a problem was solved and many a Bill was killed in wordy warfare. There is a curious note of the rent of the room at one of these houses being raised sixteen shillings a year, because of the rise in the price of tobacco. Probably it was the custom for the proprietor to put tobacco on the table for his patrons. From this meeting the London Baptist Board originated, though it would be impossible to recognise in the tame gatherings of the present body any connection with the very lively assemblies in Deering's Coffeehouse.

Among the notable ministers, the name of John Gill is prominent. He was born in Kettering in 1697. His father was a member of a union Church of the town. John, by his uncommon diligence, acquired considerable learning in his early days. He used to go to the market-place to read in a little shop kept by a seller of second-hand books. It became a proverb, "As sure as John Gill is in the bookshop." His knowledge of Latin and Greek was considerable. He became pastor of the Church meeting in the schoolroom at Goat Street. It was a split from the Church meeting upstairs; but from the fact that the two congregations met so close together, it may be inferred that they were on friendly terms. Mr. Gill established a lectureship at Great Eastcheap, which he continued for twenty-six years. The University at Aberdeen conferred upon him "on account of honest and learned defence of the true sense of Holy Scriptures," the degree of Doctor of Divinity. The good man's deacons congratulated him upon the distinction. He replied simply, "I neither thought it, nor bought it, nor

sought it." This may have been a hit at the readiness displayed by some London ministers to cover their insignificance by degrees. Dr. Gill's many works are well known. Among them perhaps "The Cause of God and Truth" and "The Body of Divinity" are the most familiar.

Joseph Maisters was described as a "sound" minister. He was born in 1640, and in due course received his education at Magdalen College, Oxford, under the celebrated Dr. Thomas Goodwin. The degree of B.A. was denied him solely on the ground of his Nonconformity. During twenty-five years he ministered to the needs of a little group of believers in Hertfordshire, and took pupils to enable him to provide for his modest requirements. When he became pastor of the Church at Joiners' Hall, the attachment was so strong that he succeeded in getting his village flock to agree to become a branch of the London Church. Thus he remained their pastor and friend until his death. Mr. Maisters was a man of culture as well as character. He attracted "many persons of great respectability," among them "the distinguished Sir Gregory Page, Bart., and his wife, Dame Mary." The "distinguished" couple paid for "two special seats with backs" to be erected for their comfort in the chapel, which offered nothing easier than forms for the congregation to sit upon during the very long sermons. The only other distinction set to the credit of Dame Mary, of "great respectability," is recorded upon her tombstone in Bunhill Fields in the words, "She was tapped sixty-six times, and had taken away 240 gallons of water, without ever repining at her case." There was some difficulty concerning the lady's funeral oration, which led Dr. Gill to publish an essay on the origin of funeral sermons, from which it appears that Mr. Harrison had been asked to deliver the eulogy over the departed, because it was "suspected that Mr. Richardson, the pastor, had not ability to compose and preach a sermon which might be acceptable." It is something to the honour of her ladyship that she was the pioneer in the agitation for the abolition of chapel forms.

Among London Baptists, Mr. Mordecai Abbot occupied an honourable position. He held several important offices under Government. He was Receiver-General of the Customs under William III. He described himself as a "strict" Nonconformist, because he absolutely declined to submit to what was called "occasional conformity." It was the practice of a few half-hearted rich Dissenters to go to the communion service of the State Church, as directed by law, in order to qualify for the office of magistrate and other positions of distinction. The practice did not obtain much among Baptists, probably because Mr. Baskerville was called in question by the Church for having gone to communion in order to secure the position of councillor. The Church decided that he showed lack of principle, and after administering and admonition they withdrew the privileges of Church fellowship from the offending member. Abbot—to his honour be it said—lost many distinctions because he refused

"To make the symbols of atoning grace
An office key, the picklock of a place,
That infidels may prove their title good
By an oath dipped in sacramental blood."

The poor people knew Mr. Abbot. Like his Master, he went about doing good. When sickness came to the home, Mordecai Abbot usually came too. He was never deaf to the complaints of the miserable, nor blind to their needs. It was said of him, "He not only wished the people well, and gave them soft speech, but he also afforded them solid supplies. He dispensed to multitudes in the most silent and secret way, observing the Saviour's rule, not letting his right hand know what his left hand did."

Far removed from controversy was Anne Steele, yet her influence upon the devotional life of Baptists has been continuous until our time. She wrote more than a hundred hymns, many of them still sung by the Churches. The most familiar of these is that commencing "Father, whatever of earthly

bliss." From childhood she was an invalid, and at times a great sufferer. In her twenty-first year she was engaged to be married to a young man who was drowned while bathing the day before the wedding was to take place. The rest of her life was devoted to works of charity, and the sending forth of verses which have comforted many while passing through the valley of the shadow. Her first publication appeared in 1760, in two volumes, under the title of "Poems on Subjects chiefly Devotional."

At Cambridge Robert Robinson was beginning to be a power. He did not accept the pastoral office until June, 1761. His influence touched many sections of the community. Members of the University, and others who never in their lives entered a Baptist meeting-house, became regular attendants at his services. Three years after a new church capable of seating six hundred persons was built and paid for. Mr. Robinson preached in many parts of the country. He knew Whitefield, to whom he owed much of his religious fervour. Perhaps he is best known as the author of the hymn "Come, thou fount of every blessing." His literary efforts were very numerous. In 1781, at the request of London Baptists, he commenced a history of the denomination, but the work, as Ivimey says, proved to be greater than he was able to perform. As a result of his labours, however, we have a "History of Baptism" and "Ecclesiastical Researches," published two years after his death. Mr. Robinson was a man of very broad sympathies. He was an intimate friend of Dr. Priestley, of Birmingham. He is sometimes described as Unitarian, but there is a sermon in Rippon's "Register," preached by him in 1781, which shows clearly that he could not have been Unitarian at that time, for he says, "Christ in Himself is a Person infinitely lovely, both as God and man." Mr. Robinson died at Birmingham, while paying a visit to the Midland city to preach for Priestley. Robert Hall, who succeeded him in the pastorate at Cambridge, was shown a copy of an epitaph which it was proposed to place in

the church where Mr. Robinson last preached. Mr. Hall did not like it, and finally wrote a substitute for it, which was used. It is as follows:—"Sacred to the memory of the Rev. Robert Robinson, of Cambridge, the intrepid champion of liberty, civil and religious. Endowed with a genius brilliant and penetrating, united to an indefatigable industry, his mind was richly furnished with an inexhaustible variety of knowledge. His eloquence was the delight of every assembly, and his conversation the charm of every private circle. In him the erudition of the scholar, the discrimination of the historian, the boldness of the reformer, were united in an eminent degree with the virtues which adorn the man and Christian. He died at Birmingham on the 8th of June, 1790, aged 54, and was buried near this spot." In this epitaph we may see the stately eloquence of Robert Hall, as well as the contemporary opinion of Mr. Robinson.

Another famous minister was Dr. Andrew Gifford. For a few stormy days he presided over the Church in Little Wild Street, but retired to Eagle Street, where he began to gather a fresh congregation. The records of the Church begin with the following statement: "Whereas in the year 1735-6 there arose an unhappy dispute in the Dissenting congregation of Baptists that then met in Little Wild Street, we whose names are hereunto subscribed, being the majority of members of the said congregation, do here in the presence of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, agree to continue as a Church of Jesus Christ baptised upon profession of faith." This was signed by Mr. Gifford, fifty-two men and thirty-nine women. Mr. Gifford was the friend of George Whitefield. He was present when Mr. Whitefield laid the first stone of the chapel in Tottenham Court Road, the original Church which continued and is perpetuated by the Whitefield Mission, which opens a new era in London Congregationalism. Mr. Gifford preached for Whitefield upon several occasions. Upon one occasion, when on his way to hear his friend preach, somebody accosted him with the question,

“Are you going to Whitefield’s?” He replied, “I am going to light my farthing rushlight at his flaming torch.” Mr. Gifford was the son of a Bristol minister. He is an illustration of a noble mind overcoming adverse circumstances. In 1754 Aberdeen created him Doctor of Divinity; Edinburgh a year before had given him the freedom of the city. He was the friend and chaplain of Sir Richard Ellys, a man of great learning and influence. His church was enlarged several times to provide room for the congregations that listened with profit and pleasure to his expositions. He was a man of varied tastes. His collection of coins was said to be the most curious in Britain. George II. was so interested in it that he purchased it for his own collection. Mr. Gifford was described as being one of the chief authorities on ancient coins and manuscripts. In 1757 he was appointed sub-librarian of the British Museum. His portrait may be seen in one of the reading-rooms, where some pleasing anecdotes used to be heard concerning the Doctor. Upon one occasion he was showing a party of gentlemen some of the treasures of the library. One of them used very profane language, punctuating his remarks with the name of God. The Doctor pointed to a very ancient manuscript as he said to the gentleman, “That is very old. Can you read that paragraph?” With a flushed face the man read, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” Upwards of two hundred ministers were present at the Doctor’s funeral in Bunhill Fields, though it was at six o’clock in the morning. Mr. John Ryland, of Northampton, father of Dr. Ryland, of Bristol, preached the sermon, standing upon a tombstone. It was described as “that remarkable oration, the powerful eloquence of which has been by no incompetent judges of orators compared to the eloquence of Demosthenes.” He concluded with the words, pointing to the grave, “Farewell, thou dear old man. We leave thee in the possession of death till the resurrection day, but we will bear witness against thee, oh, king of terrors, at the mouth of this dungeon. Thou shalt

not always have possession of this dead body. It shall be demanded of thee by the great Conqueror, and at that moment thou shalt resign thy prisoner. Oh, ye ministers of Christ, ye surrounding spectators, prepare to meet this old servant of Christ at that day when this whole place shall be nothing but life, and death shall be swallowed up in victory." Dr. Rippon, his biographer, says, "It might have been said of him, as of one of the reformers, '*Viridus voltus, vividi oculi, vividæ manus, denique omnia vivida.*' His countenance was alive; his eyes were alive; his hands were alive; in short, all were alive. If ever any man was alive in the service of God, Dr. Gifford was the man."

James Foster was pastor of the Barbican Church. He established a lectureship in Old Jewry. Mr. Miall says, "Until Edward Irving's ministry probably no preacher for nearly a hundred years enjoyed such marked popularity as this famed General Baptist minister." Few of the Churches held evening services, but Foster attracted great crowds. He was an Addison in the pulpit, though his sermons, like most of the pulpit utterances of the period, are more like moral essays upon subjects of general interest than an evangel. The Baptists had twenty-six places of worship in London. Three of them were held by Socinians, among whom Foster was counted. Pope mentions him in the line—

"Let modest Foster, if he will, excel
Ten metropolitans in preaching well."

Ryland is a household name among Baptists. John Collett Ryland was pastor of the Church at Northampton for twenty-seven years. He was as a bishop in his county. His son John, born in 1753 at Warwick, was educated by his father. The good man received into his family a number of students. He writes concerning his boy, "John is now eleven years and seven months old. He has read Genesis in Hebrew five times through; he read through the Greek Testament before nine years old; he can read Horace and Virgil; he has read through Telemachus

in French; he has read Pope's Homer in eleven volumes, Dryden's Virgil in three volumes, Rollin's 'Ancient History' in ten volumes; and he knows the pagan mythology surprisingly." There were only two courses open to such a boy. He must become famous or die of an overloaded brain. When his father removed to Enfield, John became pastor of the Church at Northampton. He was associated with Carey and Fuller in organising the Baptist Missionary Society. His is the first name appended to the resolution adopted upon that memorable day, October 2nd, 1792, when it was decided that subscriptions should be received for preaching the Gospel among heathen nations, and £13 2s. 6d. was raised.

Mr. Ryland received an invitation to the ministry of the Church at Broadmead, Bristol, and also to the presidency of the Baptist College in succession to Dr. Caleb Evans. He accepted the call, and did a work which left an abiding impression upon the religious life of English Baptists. He was the author of nearly a hundred hymns, and of several works which had considerable circulation at the time. Perhaps he is now remembered most because of the hymn commencing "Lord, teach a little child to pray." This he composed for the daughter of Andrew Fuller. The little girl was kept to her bed by sickness, and told her parents that she felt she could not pray. Mr. Ryland received a degree from Brown University, U.S.A., in recognition of his literary work. He was the author of "Memoirs of the Rev. R. Hall, of Arnsby," "A Candid Statement of the Reasons which induced the Baptists to differ in Opinion and Practice from so many of their Christian Brethren," and "The Life of Andrew Fuller."

The General Baptists held their Assembly in London in June, 1731, when it was agreed that, as there had been a division in the Assembly, they would "unite upon the belief of the doctrine of universal redemption and the practice of the foundation principles of Christ mentioned in Heb. vi. 1, 2, as they have been and are believed and practised by the Churches of

the Assembly." It was further agreed that no preacher or member "should preach, write, or urge in discourse such controversies about the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which shall be unto the disturbance of the Churches."

A year later the Assembly records its conviction that parents should instruct their children in the truth, and endeavour to bring them up in the fear of the Lord. There was a general lamentation over "the great decay of piety and holiness," and a recommendation that the great duty and privilege of fasting and prayer, and humbling themselves before God, be more frequently observed. A year before certain "articles of union" were proposed as a credal basis by brethren who thought that a creed was a barrier to heresy, but so many questions had been asked as to the meaning of this document that it was agreed to appoint Brothers Samson, Killingworth, Smith, Davy, Ingreham, and Gyles to "think on an expedient to explain ye same." The explanation was as unsatisfactory as the creed. It had the further disadvantage of showing that the creed-makers did not agree among themselves as to the meaning of the terms they used. The Assembly thought it necessary to add that "no restraint is intended to be imposed on conscience, and, so far from claiming a power of excommunication, they utterly disclaim it."

The discussion was carried to the Associations. The Northampton Churches sent a letter declaring for the articles of union, but against the interpretation of them. They say either through the weakness of our understanding, or through some obscurity in the thing itself, they do not understand the explanation, and hope that their beloved brother Thomas Haile, their representative, may be able to bring home further light upon the matter, so that they might not only rejoice themselves, but also "be rendered able to give a good reason thereof to any who ask." They think that there is no evil in subscribing what is held to be true, but that it should tend to maintain peace and unity; on the other hand, they do not

think the non-subscribing to articles, providing that it is not a cloke to shelter error, is a matter of so great moment, as to cause a division among brethren.

The agitation in favour of a creed shows how little some of the Baptists understood their own principles and the teaching of their own history. The Thirty-nine Articles did not, and do not, keep conflicting and contradictory views outside the pulpits of the State Church. The Assembly adhered to the position that authoritative creeds, by which men's consciences were fettered, could not be justified. The letter sent to the Churches is so much to the point and bears so directly upon recent controversy that, as it has not been printed before, we venture to give it fully, only changing the form of spelling :—

“As to your request that you should be glad to know from what reason we are moved to forbear signing articles of faith, it is because we find neither precept nor precedent for our so doing in the sacred Scriptures of truth, which we believe to be the only rule both of faith and practice in all religious services, and we believe that our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and His holy Apostles, who were endowed with an infallible spirit, had the only power and right to prescribe laws and rules, and appoint the boundaries of His Church's obedient communion and union ; and whoever shall attempt to do such a thing now by pretending to explain some Scriptures is usurping the authority of Christ and His Apostles without they are assured that they can infallibly determine the sense of Scripture and can give a proof of their infallibility, which we presume no Protestant Christian will pretend to do, and therefore every sincere Christian must be left to judge for himself what the sense of Scripture is according to the light which God giveth him.

“For we esteem it unlawful for any men to make and impose human compositions as a test or boundary of any Christian's faith, for they thereby offer the highest affront to the infallible

Spirit of the eternal God, which inspired the holy penmen of the Old and New Testaments, which are the only rule to prove and try every man's work both of faith and practice by, for whatever is not according to the rule is as represented in Gal. i., 6, 7, 8, and therefore we conclude that nothing but the plain words of Scripture ought to be enjoined upon the faith of Christians, not men's interpretations therefrom. For if we build our faith upon their interpretations, we are no longer the disciples of Jesus Christ, but of them whose interpretations we follow as the rule of our faith, but we conceive that all things both of faith and practice necessarily essential to the salvation of men and women are clearly and plainly found in the express words of Scripture, and if so, then all human articles of faith are needless. But if any persons should imagine that all necessary matters both of faith and practice are not plainly found in the express words of Scripture, and that they stand in need of human explanations, they must then, as we conceive, conclude that there is an imperfection in the revelation of the perfect mind of God, either through want of wisdom in Him to declare His mind to us, or goodwill to our salvation, or at least His desire of their right knowledge how to worship Him in order to attain the same, each of which are suppositions which we hope you with ourselves despise and disown, and therefore we decline making any other articles of faith and imposing them as the bonds of union, but are determined to abide by the word of God as contained in the Holy Scriptures of truth, and to settle ourselves on them only, for the peace, the comfort, joy, and safety of all the Churches of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, thereby to prevent and avoid all divisions and contentions therein for the time to come.

“And, moreover, dear brethren, we are verily persuaded that the want of such resolutions as these was the unhappy cause of most of the divisions and persecutions which appear in early times of Christianity and, to our grief and concern, of the

contentions and divisions which have prevailed, to the reproach of our most holy religion, of later years, which, therefore, should be carefully avoided by us. And as you have more than once expressed the strong desire you have of being in a firm and hearty union with us, and are so catholic and extensive in your sentiments as to declare you do not think subscribing articles a matter of so great moment as to cause division amongst us, we therefore hope that you will take full satisfaction therein, and that we shall be so happy as to enjoy your presence and have the assistance of more representatives from you to do the work and business which concerns the Churches of Christ in the next Assembly."

That letter is probably the best piece of work the General Baptist Association did during the period. If the Churches had agreed to adhere loyally to the teaching of Christ rather than to engage in fruitless controversy concerning the nature of Deity, there would not have been the occasion for lamentation that piety was dying out.

The years preceding the glorious ministry of the Wesleys and Whitefield were among the saddest in English history. The amusements of the people were cruel and degrading. Bull-baiting and cock-fighting were common sports. During the memorable year 1738, in which Wesley returned to England and learned from Peter Böhler the true way of holiness, crime was flourishing. Every week a criminal was hanged at Tyburn. The days were dark indeed, but they preceded the dawn. "Man's extremity," says Augustine, "is God's opportunity." While Bishop Butler declared in the Preface to his famous "Analogy" that it "had come to be taken for granted that Christianity was no longer a subject of inquiry, but at length was discovered to be fictitious," and Burnet lamented that "the imminent ruin hanging over the Church" was descending, the evangelists went all over the land, proclaiming the old Gospel that Jesus Christ died to save men from sin, and that salvation by faith resulted in

holiness of life. Multitudes were reclaimed from wrong-doing. The flood-tide which rose outside the Churches flowed in, fertilising the barren wastes and forcing its way into all sections of society. The Baptists were moved; converts came to them with a new passion for souls and a holy impatience with the old theological hair-splitting discourses. The chief gain to their ranks was Dan Taylor, a man of consecrated common-sense and shrewd wit. He had been schooled in adversity, and was by bitter experience acquainted with the crying needs of the democracy. Dan Taylor was a convert of Methodism. With all the ardour of new-born zeal, he began to preach the Gospel. As he studied his Bible he was led to consider the meaning of baptism, and determined to be immersed. He applied to several Baptist ministers, but they declined to baptise him either on the ground that he was wrong in affirming the universality of free grace, or in insisting upon the Divinity of the Lord Jesus. Particular Baptists and Socinians alike received him coldly. Hearing of a society of Baptists after his own heart who met in Boston, in Lincolnshire, under the ministry of a Mr. Thompson, he set out on foot in winter-time to walk to them, though they were one hundred and twenty miles away. He was immersed, and in the autumn of the same year became pastor of the Church at Wadsworth.

The General Baptist Churches were feeble in 1770. Their atmosphere was cold, and Mr. Taylor, with his unbounded energy and passion for souls, felt chilled. At last he withdrew with nine other ministers and established an evangelical association. It was called the Assembly of Free Grace General Baptists. It became the "New Connexion." The members of the new society affirmed their belief in the natural depravity of man, the obligation of the moral law, the Divinity of Christ, and the universal design of the Atonement, the promise of salvation for all who believe, the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and the obligation

upon repentance of immersion. (See "History of the General Baptists," vol. ii., p. 133.)

Though their creed is stated in six articles, they are not to be confounded with the body formed eighty-one years earlier, and known as the "Six Principle" Baptists. They objected to all human creeds, but declared that their faith was expressed in the six principles enumerated in Heb. vi. 1, 2. They continued for a long time outside the main current of Baptist life. They were not connected with the General Baptists, and few members of that body joined their ranks. They were baptised Wesleyans. Dan Taylor's life is the brightest chapter in their history. He was a sturdy man. We have a picture of him: "a young man about five-and-twenty, rather under average size, strongly built, and with a frame that exhausting labour in a coal-mine had rather more firmly knit than wasted. He took an active part in digging out from a quarry blocks of stone that were intended to be used in the erection of a new place of worship. He had already drawn the plan himself of the building. He now vigorously helped to reproduce the plan on the steep side of a romantic valley. All worked with a will, inspired by the man who was at once preacher, architect, and mason. The edifice was at length complete, when, to crown his other labours and hasten on the work, he carried on his own stalwart shoulders from the old meeting-place to the new the pulpit in which he was henceforward to labour. This was Dan Taylor in the year 1764." Five years later the Assembly, which he inaugurated, met in London. Nineteen ministers were present, eight of them being pastors of Churches which he had gathered in the midland counties.

Taylor was the inspiration of the new body. He made the first attempt to provide the Churches with a literature of their own. He edited their paper with considerable skill. He founded, and for fifteen years presided over, the institution for the education of ministers. He is said to have assisted at thirty-eight ordination services. His journeys, either to collect

money or to preach, were prodigious. Before his removal from Halifax to London he had travelled twenty-five thousand miles in preaching tours. His average on such journeys would be nine services during the week, and he did not preach the same sermon. It was told of him that when he feared that his sight was failing he began to commit the Scriptures to memory, and succeeded in learning a great part of the New Testament before he received the welcome news that his sight was not likely to diminish.

Dr. Underwood, of Chilwell College, expounded the principles of the New Connexion to the Baptist Union in 1864. They do not seem to differ in any important particulars from present-day evangelical Baptists. In more recent years they have merged in the general stream of our Church life. The reasons for their standing aloof ceased to exist when Unitarian Baptists withdrew from the denomination.

The training of ministers was a problem which gave the leaders of the Baptists great trouble. Some of the ablest preachers were self-educated. They were giants, and could not conceive that it was necessary to provide the props upon which ordinary men must lean. Others came from the State Church. They had the advantages of a university education, and were anxious that the younger men should have greater opportunities for acquiring knowledge. Among the people there were many who objected to man-made ministers, as college men were called. In the year 1770 a serious attempt was made by the formation of the Baptist Education Society. Its primary purpose was to give assistance to the Baptist Academy at Bristol, but its ideal, as expressed by Dr. Evans, was that Dissenting congregations, especially of the Baptist denomination, in any part of the British dominions should, if it pleased God, be more effectually supplied with a succession of able and evangelical ministers, and that missionaries might be sent to those places where there was an opening for the Gospel.

The efforts of Mr. Dan Taylor resulted in an academy which

afterwards became a college for young men of approved ministerial ability, who could devote their whole time to preparatory studies. Rawdon College did not come into existence until 1804. There was also a plan for making grants of money to help young ministers in pastoral charge who could not enter college, but whose education was defective. The idea seems to have been to provide books.

Baptist schoolmasters, in common with all teachers who were excluded by the theological tests in the Toleration Act, found the greatest difficulty in earning their daily bread. In March, 1772, an attempt was made by the ministers to obtain greater freedom for themselves and for God's poor scholars. They petitioned Parliament. A Bill was brought into the House of Commons by Sir Henry Houghton for the further relief of Protestant Dissenters. It was passed by the representatives of the people, but thrown out by the representatives of prejudice and privilege in the House of Lords. One bishop raised his voice for justice, but he cried in a wilderness. There was no response. It is said that the Bishop lost promotion through his advocacy, and remained to the end of his days "Green, of Lincoln."

There was a plan advocated by Robert Robinson, of Cambridge, which will some day be adopted. He desired to see a college at the University for Baptists who might prepare for the ministry, and for other students who might obtain the advantages of the University without being subjected to the ecclesiastical shackles. The scheme still waits the advent of men wise enough to carry it out. Perhaps we shall yet see at Cambridge a Baptist house in which men shall receive instruction in special subjects, and join in the wholesome rivalry of the non-theological classroom for instruction in general subjects.

The Rev. Abraham Booth published a book entitled "An Apology for Baptists," in which they are vindicated from the charge of laying an unwarrantable stress on the ordinance of baptism. It is a defence of those now designated "Strict

Baptists." It marks the division between those who insist upon immersion as a condition of Church membership and communion and those who hold that immersion is left to the individual conscience as a matter of obedience, and not prerequisite to Church fellowship. Mr. Booth did much more important work by his heroic advocacy of the freedom of the slaves. He was one of the first in England to declare that the traffic in men was a sin and a shame. The first petition to Parliament in favour of the abolition of the slave trade came from Cambridge, and was penned by a Baptist minister. One of the paragraphs reads, "Nor can your petitioners help observing with sorrow that a slave trade is a dishonour to humanity, a disgrace to our national character, utterly inconsistent with the sound policy of commercial states, and a perpetual scandal to the profession of Christianity." Most of the prominent Baptist ministers stood out as the advocates of freedom for the coloured races, though it required more than common courage to oppose the vested interests and the prejudice which united in favour of slavery.

At the close of the century many Baptist congregations had "friendly societies" for the relief of the poor and the visitation of the sick. A penny a week subscription was paid, and the management was in the hands of the members. There were also "benefit societies" corresponding to the modern organisations which have done so much to strengthen the sense of independence and to prevent poverty. The members belonged to the Churches. The poorer men paid a shilling per month, and generous friends gave larger subscriptions, in order that all might be saved from distress in the times of adversity. The social gospel does not seem to be such a new thing as some Baptists suppose.



WILLIAM CAREY IN HIS WORKSHOP.

CHAPTER X

THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

THE story of the Baptist Missionary Society is an unfinished chapter in the Acts of the Apostles. It opens in a strange period of almost stagnation at home and strife abroad. The health-giving breezes of revival were shaking the dead leaves in the Churches. There was the promise of spring. Robert Raikes in establishing Sunday-schools was laying the foundations of national education. John Howard was making the reformation of the criminal classes an urgent question. Abroad England and France were contending for the leadership among the nations. The expansion of England into Greater Britain presented new opportunities and laid new obligations upon the Churches. The times demanded seers and statesmen. While a journeyman cobbler was haunted by the thought that multitudes of men in the new lands had not heard the Gospel of Christ, there was in England a Mr. Grant who had come from India to try and persuade the Archbishop of Canterbury to start a mission to our Indian empire. The Archbishop promised to mention it to Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Pitt said he would speak of the matter to the King. King George was trembling on his throne, and Mr. Pitt was trembling also lest he should not be able to keep him there, and he said, "It is too revolutionary. The greatest disaster that could happen would be to disturb and introduce new elements in India," whereupon the Archbishop, with all the resources of the National Church at his command, told Mr. Grant that nothing could be done. So it happened that missions in India were

founded for our fellow-subjects, not by the Established Church, but by men from obscurity, whose names the great public did not know.

The first half of the century saw Evangelicalism the dominant power in the Church of England. The leading clergy were mainly from its ranks; the popular clergy almost to a man stood under its banners. Yet it is astonishing that when Evangelicalism became popular it ceased to produce great men. Very few strong men were among the bishops until Wilberforce was consecrated in 1845. As the century opened the social influences in the Church became more powerful. Thought for others was the dominating influence. Men awoke to a sense of national responsibilities entailed by the extraordinary increase in the population and the wealth of the country. In 1799 the Religious Tract Society was founded, under the chairmanship of the well-known Nonconformist leader Rowland Hill. It had for its purpose the distributing of religious tracts among the people. The Bible Society was founded five years after, and a whole network of philanthropic organisations came into existence. Professor Wakeman says, "New ventures in politics, new schemes of philosophy, new knowledge in science, new methods in art, tripped one another up in the race for the mastery over the intellect and the interests of men. The Church of England alone, amidst the clash of new ideas, remained inert and lethargic and, as men thought, dying, waiting for the trumpet tongue which, under God's providence, might yet wake her from her sleep."

By a series of events God had touched a few elect souls to a fine enthusiasm and noble sacrifice. Andrew Fuller had published an essay called "The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation," in which he announced his rejection of the paralysing creed which possessed nearly all the Churches. He insisted that the Gospel was not for a few, but for all; that the invitation to trust Christ was not a sham, but an invitation which could be accepted by any man through the grace of God.

William Carey read that book, and wrote "An Inquiry into the Obligation of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen." Dr. G. Smith observes, "The inquiry has a literary history of its own as a contribution to the statistics and geography of the world, written in a cultured and almost polished style, such as few, if any, university men of that day could have produced, for none were impelled by such a motive as Carey had. In an obscure village, toiling save when he slept, and finding rest on Sundays only by a change of toil, far from libraries and society of men with more advantages than his own, this shoemaker, still under thirty, surveys the whole world continent by continent, island by island, race by race, faith by faith, kingdom by kingdom, tabulating his results with an accuracy and following them up with a logical power of generalisation which would extort the admiration of the learned men of this present day."

Carey's vision was simply a survey of the facts from the standpoint of the Cross. In reading "Cook's Voyages," he journeyed "round the world" to learn man's need, and the Gospel in his hand taught him where that need could be met. God trains His servants in strange schools: Moses in the king's palace, Elijah in the caves of Carmel and Horeb, David by the sheep-track. Carey, not the father of missions—for God left not Himself without witness in any land or age—but the father of organised missionary enterprise, was trained in the cobbler's shop. His story is well known. As a boy he learned the meaning of Greek words from a profligate workman in the factory in which he was employed. He seems to have had a passion for the acquisition of languages. In seven years he had learned sufficient French, Dutch, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew to read easily in all these languages, and that with scarcely any instruction except such as he obtained from books, which were usually borrowed. Before his death he was well versed in more than twenty of the languages and dialects of India, and for twenty-nine years he was Oriental professor at Fort William

College, Calcutta. While in the cobbler's shop at Northampton, with a book by his side, he plodded through so much knowledge that his information made him a living encyclopædia. In his room, with such crude material as he could obtain, he made a series of maps representing the physical and religious geography of the world. To eke out his income, he tried keeping school. To illustrate his lessons in geography, he made a leather globe. Probably the few who came for instruction learned little from that globe, but to Carey it told an eloquent story of millions living in the darkness. It became to him a sort of beckoning hand from those whose need cried, "Come over and help us."

A series of events prepared the way. Carey became a minister. He preached in England, but his heart was in India. At last the birth hour of his great purpose struck. He met Fuller and Sutcliff. They had determined to bring missionary work prominently before the Churches in the Association sermons at Clipstone in 1791. At Nottingham, in the following year, Carey was one of the preachers. His subject was the only subject possible to the man, his text Isa. liv. 2, 3. The sermon was condensed into two propositions: first, "that we should expect great things from God"; and second, "that we should attempt great things for God." A deep impression was made, and, upon the proposition of Andrew Fuller, it was resolved "That against the next meeting of ministers at Kettering a plan should be prepared for the purpose of forming a society for propagating the Gospel among the heathen." On October 2nd, 1792, twelve or thirteen men met to determine what the first steps should be. Like another company, they met in a little room waiting for the baptism of the Spirit. It was the back parlour of Widow Beeby Wallis's house in which the Society was cradled. After prayer a series of seven resolutions was agreed upon, setting forth the need and the determination to carry the Gospel to heathen lands. The signatures commending the

resolutions were—John Ryland, Reynold Hogg, John Sutcliff, Andrew Fuller, Abraham Greenwood, Edward Sharman, Joshua Burton, Samuel Pearce, Thomas Blundell, W. Heigh-ton, John Eayers, Thomas Timms. Carey's name was not on the list. A committee was appointed. Andrew Fuller undertook the office of secretary, and Mr. Hogg that of treasurer. The first money committed to his charge was £13 2s. 6d., contributed by that little company, a seed-corn which has produced, in the providence of God, millions.

There were those who were startled by the conception. They felt as Dr. Ryland felt before as he listened to Carey's sublime audacity: he exclaimed, "Sit down, young man. When God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine." There were those cheap critics who argued that the gift of tongues must be granted before anything could be attempted. Others insisted that the elect would be saved with or without preaching. Outside the Church the missionaries were taunted with being "apostates of the anvil and the loom," but the criticisms recoiled upon those who made them. Mr. Beecher says, "Some guns kick so badly that it were better to be before than behind them." Carey has the place of honour now, and Sydney Smith, with all the brilliancy of his wit, and the crowd of lesser lights who followed his example, stand pilloried by public opinion. Within eight months Carey, with Mr. Thomas, a ship surgeon, who had entered the service of the East India Company in 1783, commenced work in India. Before Carey went an account of Thomas's work led Fuller to remark, "There is a gold mine in India, but it seems almost as deep as the centre of the earth. Who will venture to explore it?" Carey, turning to Sutcliff, Fuller, and Ryland, replied, "I will venture to go down, but remember that you must hold the ropes." The conference lasted long into the evening. It was interrupted by the arrival of Dr. Thomas himself. Carey rose from his seat and fell upon his neck. They were united in purpose, and afterwards in work. They were the

pathfinders for the glorious company of missionaries who have followed in the service of God in India.

Upon their arrival in India they were prohibited from settling upon territory belonging to the East India Company. They turned to the protection of the Danish flag. Denmark had the honour of planting the first Protestant mission in India, in 1705, and of giving a home to the first English missionaries in Serampore. Carey and Thomas set up a printing press. They went from village to village preaching the Gospel. Carey began his Bengali translation of the Bible, and studied Sanscrit, and commenced to compile his dictionaries, the homely beginning of a magnificent work. They started a school for native children, the first ever set up by Europeans in Hindustan. Forty boys were in attendance in 1799. Carey took out a licence for indigo planting, and Thomas superintended the work as well as conducted a medical mission. "The cures wrought by him," says Carey, "would have gained any physician or surgeon in Europe the most extensive reputation." Carey began to write home concerning the inhuman practices common in India. He had witnessed in Calcutta the burning of a widow upon the funeral pyre of her husband. This horrible practice, justified by the Brahmins only by the shameful change of a single word of their sacred text, was long excused and defended by English officials, but now Carey wrote with the indignation and vividness of an eye-witness. He presents as in a drama the whole thing in all its terrible realism. England no longer can plead ignorance. It is a shocking murder. The conflict between Christianity and Hinduism had commenced, and the practice of "suttee" was doomed. Carey's work became known. England looked with amazement at the daring invasion of India, hoary with superstition and held powerless in the grip of the greed of a great company as it had been for many years, the invaders two solitary men, Carey and Thomas, but their voices aroused multitudes to the fact that a great war had commenced. The

first accounts, published in 1794, moved Robert Haldane to sell all that he had and devote his £35,000 to the work of missions. Soon after the London Missionary Society began its beneficent work. The Church Missionary Society was formed in 1799, two societies were formed in Scotland, one in Edinburgh and one in Glasgow, and another in the Netherlands; and the two pioneers, Carey and Thomas, learned in their loneliness that Europe had heard the call, and the Churches were responding.

Fuller at home had no need now to turn into the back lanes to hide his tears of disappointment. The example of the Haldanes stirred the people, and volunteers offered their services. Marshman and Ward were accepted. Marshman was born at Westbury Leigh, Wiltshire, April 20th, 1768. He very soon evinced a fondness for study. While at school at Bristol he united with the Church at Broadmead, and in his spare time began to learn Hebrew and Syriac. Then, hearing of Dr. Carey's work, in 1799 he and his young wife, filled with zeal for the extension of Christ's kingdom, offered themselves for missionary service. They went to India during the next year, and opened a boarding-school for training natives according to English methods. Marshman devoted much time to the Chinese language, and he was enabled to send out the four Gospels in Chinese.

William Ward, the third of the celebrated triumvirate in mission enterprise, came from Derby. A printer by trade, and for a time editor of the *Derby Mercury*, he conducted papers in Stafford and Hull. During his residence in the latter place he united with the Baptist Church. There he learned of the work of the missionaries, and that they wished to secure the services of a practical printer in order to publish their translation of the Scriptures. Ward at once was filled with desire to undertake the work. He was accepted, and with Marshman, Grant, Brunsdon, and their families, set sail for India. His work in the far-away empire is well known. It is told as an inspiration to our boys, and an object lesson of the way in

which difficulties may be overcome by a consecrated man, resolutely going through struggle to achievement in the service of his Lord.

There is a picture given by old Dr. Thomas. It shows us the first three at home in the strange land. In a spacious house and grounds Carey, Marshman, and Ward had taken up their abode. Carey carried on his work of translation, which Ward saw through the press. Marshman had been a weaver and then a schoolmaster. His linguistic abilities surprised even Carey. He and his gifted wife, whose labours for the mission and India were hardly less than her husband's, carried on the schools, the profits of which soon amounted to a thousand pounds a year. Here all the missionaries lived together as one family, after the manner of the Moravians, having one table and one purse. Thomas thus describes his colleagues: "the indefatigable Carey, a man made on purpose for the work; Mr. Marshman, a good scholar, a circumspect Christian, a diligent persevering man, with a soul easily put into motion by every fresh view of the abominations and perishing condition of the heathen on the one hand, and by every ray of hope of their salvation by any means on the other; Mr. Ward, a printer, a regular warm Christian, zealous without enthusiasm, a man of circumspect walk, with a care of souls upon him, a man acquainted with the fulness and freeness of sovereign grace and the efficacy of appointed ordinances, one that ploughs, sows, and harrows, without forgetting the rain and sun, and one that remembers the rain and the sun without forgetting to plough; and, lastly, one John Thomas. This man has one ground of hope at the very beginning of that text, 'And base things of the world and things that are despised God has chosen.'" Dr. Thomas is not much remembered, the brilliance of his colleagues dims his light, but he was a fine man. The strain of his work unhinged his reason, and he became practically helpless on the very day that the first fruit of the mission was reaped.

Seven years passed before the first native convert, Krishna Pal, was baptised. Such a convert was worth waiting for. He made the acquaintance of the missionaries through an accident. His arm was broken, and Dr. Thomas was called to set the broken limb. He did it successfully and told his patient about the great Physician. His words found a home in the heart of the Hindu, and he came again to learn more. His wife and daughter became interested in the story of the strange God, and finally Krishna renounced his caste, and with his family applied for baptism upon profession of faith. The native priests were furious. They moved the people to intense excitement, a mob surrounded Krishna's dwelling-place, and protection became necessary. But the new converts stood firm. Krishna himself, with Dr. Carey's own son, Felix, was baptised in the presence of a great concourse of people, to whom Thomas told the story of the Cross. Not long after, his brother Gokol and the rest of the family were baptised, and the first-fruits of the harvest were gathered in. Krishna Pal is known wherever British Christians sing his hymn :—

“ Oh, thou my soul, forget no more
The Friend who all thy misery bore ;
Let every idol be forgot,
But, oh, my soul, forget Him not.

“ Jesus for thee a body takes,
Thy guilt assumes, thy fetters breaks,
Discharging all thy dreadful debt,
And canst thou e'er such love forget ? ”

The hymn shows clearly the theology Krishna Pal had learned. It was in the old evangelical dress that the Gospel came to him. He became a preacher among the natives, and hundreds of converts were gathered into the Churches through his instrumentality.

Carey was successfully engaged in business enterprise. His income reached £1,500 a year, out of which he drew the modest sum of £50, devoting the remainder to the mission for which

he lived. His colleagues at home remained loyal through all the opposition. Fuller had promised to hold the ropes, and he kept his word. As secretary of the Society, he was the pilot during the first stormy voyage. In 1770 he had been impressed while witnessing a baptism; soon after he found his Lord. In 1782 he became minister of the Church at Kettering. He was a clear thinker and a ready debater, a man of tireless energy and iron will. His first meeting with Carey was at Olney in June, 1782. It was the Association assembly. Carey heard a "round-headed rustic-looking" young minister preach on "being men of understanding." He also read the circular letter to the Churches on the "grace of hope." Carey enjoyed the utterance, although he actually fasted all that day, because he had not a penny to buy his dinner. They became close friends. They had much in common; they were self-taught; they had felt the difficulties of life; they both knew the sorrows of the world. Fuller became the emancipator of the Baptist denomination. He was the theologian who delivered the Churches from that terrible fatalism which resulted from ultra-Calvinism. As the statesman of the Missionary Society, he was "in labours more abundant, in journeyings often, in weariness and painfulness and in watchings often." No toil was too hard, no opposition too powerful, for him to face. The callousness of the Churches he changed into enthusiasm; the hostility of vested interests he overcame. The East India Company had declared that they hoped the age was become too enlightened for attempts to make proselytes to Christianity among the natives. They asserted that the conversion of fifty or a hundred thousand natives of any degree of character would be the most serious disaster that could happen. They were right. The work of the missionaries sounded the death-knell of the reign of the East India Company. Edinburgh Reviewers and many Anglo-Indians tried hard to prevent any more missionaries being sent to the East, and even to get Carey and his colleagues recalled. Fuller conducted the defence,

and was victorious. During the last years of his life his energy was not devoted to gain the support of the Churches, but to secure from the Government the liberty, which is the right of every man, for the missionaries. Before he passed to his heavenly reward, in 1815, he saw a change of policy forced upon the officials by public opinion. When the sad news came in 1812 that the fire at Serampore had destroyed missionary property valued at £10,000, Fuller spent his days and nights in seeking to repair the damage. In five weeks the amount required was raised, and contributions had to be stopped. Before the termination of his labours of love Fuller saw as the result of the toils in which for more than twenty-two years he had taken a conspicuous part some glorious achievements. The Society had a firm hold upon the sympathies of the churches. Nearly £90,000 had been subscribed. The Scriptures had been translated into many languages; native Churches were formed; many converts were preaching to their own countrymen.

Samuel Pearce, of Birmingham, was one of those who signed the first constitution of the Society. He was anxious to go out to preach to the heathen, but the home ties were too strong. His Church determined to urge him to continue his ministry in the home land. He appealed to the committee of the Missionary Society, and left himself in their hands as to whether the sphere of his work should be in India or in England. It was determined that he should remain at home, and loyally he accepted the decision, though it could not have been less than a great disappointment. During his ministry he continually advocated the claims of Baptist missions. He preached wherever an opportunity occurred, and by tireless effort did much to arouse the Churches and to inspire them with that yearning for their fellow-men which characterised his own life. In 1794 he wrote to ministers in the United States urging the formation of an American Baptist foreign missionary society, which was ultimately established, and has

sent its representatives to the uttermost parts of the earth. Dr. Lorimer declared that the American Missionary Board had circled the globe and traversed the earth, preaching the Gospel. That was a rhetorical way of affirming that to the American brethren great credit is due for their sacrifice and heroism in promoting the interests of the Gospel in other lands. The seed Samuel Pearce sowed fell on good soil, and bore fruit a hundredfold. Though called to his reward in the prime of manhood, while there seemed so much work for him still to accomplish, he left the record of a well-spent life and a fragrant memory which long survived. Some of his hymns are still sung by Indian converts.

The General Baptists in 1816 organised a missionary society of their own. They had offered to assist the older institution, but their overtures did not meet with success. The Rev. J. G. Pike had proposed that he and his brethren should form themselves into an auxiliary society. This was regarded as a movement which would be sure to introduce complications. Independent action was necessary, and the new organisation had its birth at Boston, the town from which two centuries earlier many of the Puritans, after finding temporary abode in Holland, sailed westward in the *Mayflower*, and gave to America forces which enrich her land to-day. Nottingham, where Carey's awakening call was heard, was the place in which the General Baptists held the first meeting of their committee. To Mr. Pike is due the honour of having guided the frail craft upon its first voyage.

Pike is a name famous in Baptist history, and is still represented in the ranks of the ministry. J. G. Pike was born in 1784. A memoir edited by his sons was published in 1854, the year of his death. He possessed the passion of the missionary. As Brainerd yearned to be a "living flame for God," so at the very beginning of his work Pike desired that he might preach among the sons of Africa the glorious Gospel of the grace of God. Scarcely had he gained a place in the

ranks of the General Baptists when he succeeded, though almost a stranger to his brethren, in compelling the attention of the Association to the pressing need and imperative duty of establishing missions to the forgotten nations of the earth. Incessantly by pen and speech he urged the duty of carrying the Gospel to other lands. He so quickened the faith and zeal of the Church of which he was minister at Derby, that, though it was unable to find the money for his own support, it undertook the responsibility of providing for a native preacher of the Serampore Mission. In the Midlands missionary zeal burned brightly at different points. Of course there were many Churches, perhaps the majority, with no passion for the needs of men outside their own congregation, but there were others: Kettering was the home of Fuller, Nottingham had felt the throb of Carey's passion, and Pike determined to push forward the creation of a missionary society which should be under the direction of the General Baptists. It was a hard task. The apologists of inactivity then, as now, did not lack eloquence or fail of seeming success. They urged their weakness, their poverty; Pike reminded them of the devotion of the Moravian brethren. They then said, "Find the men who will go"; Pike replied that God, who took Carey from the shoemaker's stall, Ward from the printing office, and Marshman from the day-school, could raise up servants if they were ready to go forward with the work. At last he succeeded, and the Society was formed. The Church at Nottingham, more sanguine in the cause, ventured to commence a subscription. They also recommended the subject to the consideration of the Midland Conference, and that meeting issued a note to all the Churches in the connexion requesting them to attend and to discuss the matter at the next Assembly. When they came together, it did not seem an opportune moment for a new enterprise. The wounds left by Waterloo were unhealed, the country had been drained of money, taxation was heavy, and the Churches poor as well as hard of heart. We cannot be surprised that

men were slow to accept the new responsibility. The movement would have died at its birth but for the zeal of Mr. Pike. He went throughout the Churches, pleading with them until they were familiar with the need and without excuse. He started a series of penny-a-week associations in connection with Churches and schools; by his perseverance he overcame difficulties which threatened calamity, and succeeded in putting the Society upon a firm basis.

Four volunteers came forward for missionary work. They were Mr. and Mrs. Bampton and Mr. and Mrs. Peggs. The Society engaged them as missionaries. Bampton added to his acquisitions by the study of medicine and surgery, and Peggs gave special attention to elementary education. They were set aside to the high office of missionaries at a meeting of the Church at Loughborough. Ward, of Serampore, addressed the crowded meeting, and the historian of the occasion says: "The day was peculiarly happy, distinguished for affection and zeal, and will probably form a new era in the history of the New Connexion." Now came the greatest difficulty of all. The Society had four missionaries, and had not decided where they should send them. They prayed for guidance, and waited. "We wish," said they, "to convey the Gospel to some nation for whom no man cares." The missionaries were sent to Serampore to consult Dr. Carey, and get the advice of men already engaged in the work. With Mr. Ward and Mrs. Marshman, they set sail on the 28th of May, 1821. Upon their arrival in India they found that an unseen hand had already pointed out their field of labour. Orissa, near to Serampore, had already by its dire needs moved the sympathy and quickened the zeal of the missionaries there. Carey had desired to plant a mission near the Temple of Jaganath, but the hostility of the Government officials made it difficult. Carey, however, had commenced translating the Scriptures into the language of the people. So it came about that the General Baptist Mission was started in Orissa. The country

was a vast mass of isolated villages and hamlets; towns were few and small. The habits of the people and their religious customs were centuries old, and they possessed an invincible repugnance to anything new. Dr. Hunter says: "No splendid historical characters adorn their annals. Even in literature, the peculiar glory of the Indian race, the people of this province have won no conspicuous triumph; they have written no famous epic; they have struck out for themselves no separate school of philosophy, elaborated no new system of law." They were slaves to custom. In nothing were they so devoted as in their attachment to their religion. They had breathed in its ideas in childhood, and met them at every turn. It was central to all their interests. When the missionaries commenced their labours, one dark unbroken night of sin and sorrow overspread the land, and the darkness had been growing darker and denser for ages. All appeared so hopelessly discouraging that it seemed to say, "Your prayers cannot pierce this gloom, nor your labours open an avenue sufficient to let down a ray of heaven's light on this idolatrous province."

Mr. Peggs set himself to study the people as well as to work for them. He acquired information concerning their history and needs. He investigated their religion and compared it with their practice, proving that the burning of widows with their dead husbands was neither commanded nor sanctioned by authoritative Hindu legislators, and was in fact a horrid degradation of the Hindu religion. During four years he laboured with splendid heroism, and then, worn out in body and in mind, was invalided home. In England he spread the light concerning the condition of India. The social conscience was moved a little. He published "India's Cries," dealing with infanticide, suttee, murder, the pilgrim tax, and other wrongs. His voice was one of the first to break the shameful silence upon the opium traffic. He petitioned Parliament and appealed to the King. Pamphlet followed pamphlet, until he had accomplished more for the people of Orissa in his weakness

at home than he would have done if his days had been ended in their midst. Few men wrought more effectively for the social regeneration of India than the first missionary of the General Baptist Society.

Bampton moved to Pooree, and built his missionary station in sight of the Temple of Jaganath. Nothing less would content him. He wished to carry his attack into the very fortress and stronghold of the enemy. Reinforcements were sent; orphanages were started, and a college for the education of native students for the ministry. Carey waited seven years for his first convert; Bampton toiled to the end of the sixth year before he saw the first man confess Christ under his ministry. Carey and Bampton both knew that it was not the formal acceptance of a creed, but the living of the life, that was the goal of their efforts. Native preachers carried the work of the mission into far-away districts. The story of their loyalty to their Lord and the sacrifices they made is full of inspiration and romance. The women played a conspicuous part from the beginning. With sweet reasonableness and beautiful devotion, they co-operated with their husbands in many forms of service, and vindicated the faith of those who believe that in the ministry of the Church there is neither male nor female, but an equality of opportunity. Native women, with their sisters who came from England, laboured for the instruction of the girls of East India; and in the visitation of the sick they found an entrance where men were denied. The Bible-women carried the good news to the womanhood of Orissa. Native Churches were founded; Sunday-schools, young men's societies, a total abstinence association, and institutions unknown to the Church at home, were set working for the amelioration of the condition of the people.

For a long time the conviction had deepened that both sections of the Baptist denomination in the mission field could serve Christ better if they united their forces. To give effect to the desire for amalgamation, representatives of both societies

had been in consultation for two years, but it was not until 1891 that the union was effected. From that date the Baptist Missionary Society was undivided.

Baptists have been strong believers in the efficacy of the Gospel, without note or comment, to bring men to the truth as it is in Jesus. Because of this faith, they have been translators of the Scriptures. Carey gave the Bible to the Bengali in the language the people could read, Marshman sent the Gospel to China, Judson gave the Bible to Burmah, Mason translated the Gospels for the Karens, Nathan Brown sent the Scriptures in the language of the Assamese and Japanese, Jewett transcribed the story of the Cross so that the Telugus could read it, our brethren on the Congo have made the word of truth accessible to those who, before the missionaries went to their midst, had no written language. The Bible Translation Society for fifty-six years has carried on its work. In the dialects of India it has circulated the Scriptures, and much as we may regret the existence of a denominational Bible society, this organisation has done much for the extension of the kingdom of God. In the British and Foreign Bible Society, Baptists from the commencement have taken a keen interest, which has grown with the years.

Missionary enterprise has grown enormously. In China and darkest Africa, the Baptists are represented in the outposts of the missionary campaign. Interest in the Dark Continent was shown as early as 1795, when two messengers were sent to Sierra Leone. All along the banks of the mighty river Congo our brethren have gone to preach the Gospel. Who shall tell of the heroism of Comber and the company of brave souls whose graves have been dug by the Congo's waters? Generous offerings have been made for steamships to trade upon the Congo in the service of Jesus. Nearly thirty brethren are connected with the Congo mission. Native converts have shown their fidelity by their readiness to bear trials and to give of their poverty offerings to extend the Kingdom. The

labours have begun to tell, the night still clings, but the day is breaking, for the voice of Jesus has been heard in village and hamlet, and its music is wafted with the rhythm of the waters of that mighty river upon whose banks cities are growing, which we trust in the ages to come will still bear the impress of the Gospel they are now receiving.

In China, missionary enterprise is perhaps more arduous than in any other land. The ancient civilisation and the tradition of its glories, which inspire the people with the pride of superiority to all mankind, make the work of the missionary extremely difficult. The morals of Confucius, the metaphysics of Laotse seem to have exhausted all practical wisdom and speculative inquiry. Few lands have seen more revolutions, yet no revolution has changed the laws or the customs of the people. They are a cultivated and polite race, their civilisation was old before Northern Europe had emerged from barbarism. England owes a great debt to China. She has demoralised a large proportion of this vast empire with a vice as bad as that of drunkenness. The opium traffic is the missionaries' chief difficulty. Amongst the things impossible, the conversion of the Chinese would seem to be numbered, but the story the Baptist representatives have to tell is full of encouragement. Dr. Glover, who visited the mission stations on behalf of the home Churches, describes a work full of promise. Dr. Richard, whose devotion to his adopted land has been rewarded so richly by good results, is full of hope as he surveys the field. Shantung was the first station occupied by the Society. It is the birthplace of Confucius. Some feel that to win Shantung is to win the empire. It is more free from the opium vice than most other provinces of China. What London is to England, Shantung is to China. It is one of the fields on which the Gospel has won its chief victories. Through revolution our missionaries have kept to their posts; even the massacre of their brethren before their eyes has not turned them back from the path in which the Divine Voice called them to walk.

The secretaries of the Home Society have been men of great devotion. Dr. Ryland and James Hinton, the saintly pastor of the Church at Oxford, were associated after Andrew Fuller was called to higher service. Robert Hall said, "It is not easy to determine whether the success of our mission is most to be ascribed to the vigour of Fuller, the prudence of Sutcliff, or the piety of Ryland." In 1841, Mr. John Dyer became secretary. He was a man prompt and persevering, cautious in action, and well-informed. His successor was Dr. Angus, to whom reference is made later. Drs. Trestreil and Underhill were at the head of affairs for nearly twenty years. For a time the Rev. Clement Bailhache stood at the helm. His patience and consideration won the admiration of all who knew him. But the statesman of modern missions is Alfred Henry Baynes; to him the Society will ever be indebted. At the request of Sir Morton Peto, Mr. Baynes was called to office in 1876. Twice he has been to India and Ceylon, to obtain information on the spot. Frequently he has gone to discuss the interests of the work with foreign powers. He has shown the ability of the diplomatist and devotion of the Christian. Upon the public platform he is well-known. Few men can move the hearts of a large audience as Mr. Baynes. With him has been associated the Rev. J. B. Myers for many years. He is the author of a number of little volumes of missionary biographies. His work in the Mission House is discharged with keen business ability and consecration to a great cause. To his assistance we are indebted for many of the facts in this chapter.

At the last annual meeting the treasurer's report showed an expenditure during the year of nearly £83,000. An attempt is being made to raise the income to the annual sum of £100,000. The two mission printing presses in Calcutta and Cuttack each contribute over £666 from profits, and an increase in the aggregate of miscellaneous receipts of nearly £700 as compared with the preceding year. From these figures we may see how greatly the interest in missions has increased among the Baptists.

CHAPTER XI

BAPTIST WORK AND WORKERS AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

IN the eighteenth century, the State Church became steadily more inadequate to the needs of the country. It ceased to hold its representative assembly, and was hard pressed by the Free Churches. In 1700, Dissenters did not number more than one-twentieth of the English people. In 1800, they were reckoned at one-fifth, and the Churchmanship of the four-fifths was in the great majority of cases only nominal. Religion in England found its voice among the exiles from the National Church. The Particular Baptists in England and Wales counted four hundred and seventeen churches, with twenty-nine thousand members. The General Baptists had one hundred churches.

The polemical passion found expression in almost innumerable pamphlets. Baptists made good use of the printing press. They issued sermons and booklets insisting upon the primitive faith and forms of the Church as against the sacerdotal and latitudinarian spirit represented by the leading ecclesiastics of the day. The narrowness of Baptists like Abraham Booth was in part the reaction from the liberal-mindedness which declared belief in the Thirty-nine Articles, and then contended for their rejection on the ground that they were not true. The position is described by an Eastern prince, whose satire is stronger because it is unconscious. Acquaintance with the usual defence of the creed showed him how to escape the difficulty of his own religious vows. He says, "I take them

like my Christian friends take theirs. I say, 'I believe in Buddha,' but I don't."

Dr. Gregory says that few Baptist ministers thought of addressing sinners from the pulpit; they confined their addresses to the elect. The Evangelical movement brought new forces into the current of religious life, which not only sweetened the waters but changed the course in which they flowed.

Andrew Fuller had provided a reasonable way of escape from that ultra-Calvinism which, though often represented by men of saintly character, was as a sepulchre wherein compassion and zeal for the souls of men gave place to the corruption of morbid self-depreciation and soured sympathies. Fuller and the new Calvinists saved the Baptist Churches from dying from stagnation. The strongest opposition to moderate Calvinism came from Abraham Booth, who was the most powerful pulpit force in London, a man of iron will and great natural gifts. In early life he worked at the stocking loom, and while tending the machine entirely composed in his mind a work upon the "Reign of Grace," which he wrote from memory after the day's toil was over.

Henry Venn, the eminent Evangelical clergyman, read the manuscript, and made a special journey to the writer, whom he found in the factory. Booth's work was published, and almost immediately he stepped into the front rank of Baptist ministers. By hard toil he mastered Greek and Latin, and became so familiar with Church history that his opponents marvelled at the range and accuracy of his knowledge. In the great controversy over the terms of communion, Mr. Booth was the victor in almost countless conflicts, but he fought against the broadening tendency of the age, which was too strong for him. Though he insisted upon a hard and narrow view of the Christian Church, he was a man of tender heart and genuine humility. In controversy he fought without gloves and fought to the finish, but he was always fair and honest. The way in

which he pleaded for the slaves, and vindicated freedom as the birthright of every man, entitled him to honourable remembrance, and a foremost place among the Baptists of his time.

John Martin, a man of another type, was pastor of the Reppel Street Church for more than forty years. The sweetness of his disposition gave him great influence with ministers and congregations. During fifty years he kept a record of his life, which he put in the form of "Letters to a Friend." It is a remarkable self-revelation, in which nothing is kept back. Mr. Martin was apprenticed to an enterprising gentleman, whom he describes as "a confectioner, china and glass man, mustard maker, brick maker, maltster, dealer in tiles, freestone and some other things"—a sort of William Whiteley of the olden times. When out with his employer at Skipton he came under the influence of the Gospel. He says, "We were compelled to stay all night at the village inn. I found myself restless. The landlady came into the little parlour where I sat alone, and said, 'You seem to want company. You and my son shall go to the Methodist meeting. It will be rare sport for you.' I was surprised at her odd behaviour, and made no answer. She added, 'The Methodists are a queer sort of folk, but they won't hurt you.' My curiosity was excited, and with her son, an illiterate weaver, I went. It was held in a large room, in which were about twenty or thirty people assembled. A grave looking man stood opposite to me behind the back of an old chair. After singing and prayer, he took for his text the words, 'They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherwards.' I was not impressed with any of his remarks till near the close of his sermon, when he said, 'Some, I fear, instead of asking the way to Zion are asking the way to hell with their faces thitherward.' This remark I thought severe, but it might be true, and I began to be troubled." He tried to reform himself, but in vain. Then he sought to get rid of his convictions, but finally he surrendered, as he says, to God, and became His servant. After

a while he became minister of a village church, where he was passing rich on less than forty pounds a year. When he came to London the magnetism of his gentle personality and the reasonableness of his discourse drew around him a devoted people. The old meeting-house in Grafton Street became inadequate. Mr. Ashlin, one of the deacons, asked permission to build a new chapel at his own expense, promising that when it was complete, if it met with approbation, the Church members should give anything they wished towards the cost, but that nobody should be pressed to subscribe. The building was erected at a total expense of £3,475, towards which the members gave £1,700, and generous Mr. Ashlin presented the pastor with the deeds and the key.

Mr. Martin, in one of his last discourses, described an imaginary preacher who fell under terrible trials and lost all his physical power. At last his mind gave way, and the poor man became helpless and lacked wisdom like a baby, yet he felt that he was not cut off from the love of God. It would seem like a presentiment, for Mr. Martin was literally brought into the condition he so vividly depicted. During six years he lingered in imbecility, all his mental furniture gone in advance before the tenement of clay lost its occupant. His biographer says, "He resumed the full enjoyment of all his powers to the praise of God, April 23rd, 1820, in the eightieth year of his age." Two volumes of sermons and many pamphlets remain to indicate the quality of his work. The Church Book says, "More than fifty mourning coaches and great crowds followed in the funeral procession to Bunhill Fields."

One of the great figures in Baptist life was Dr. Rippon. He was the first person to compile on an extensive scale a book of tunes with a companion hymn-book suitable for religious worship. "Rippon's Selection" is not yet forgotten. As the successor of Dr. Gill, John Rippon was for forty years one of the most popular preachers in England. A child of the manse, he was born at Tiverton, where his father

was pastor. He was educated in the Bristol Academy, then under the care of the Rev. Hugh Evans. Dr. Rippon was a determined Calvinist; nevertheless, he entered largely into efforts for social betterment. He founded almshouses for old people, he furthered the interests of a day school on the plan popularised by Joseph Lancaster. He published the *Baptist Register*, a periodical devoted to the interests of the denomination, yet broad enough to render effective service to the whole Christian community. The Carter Lane church was the cradle of the Metropolitan Tabernacle and the most historic Baptist place of worship in London. The following extract from the Church Minute Book sets forth Dr. Rippon's services as they appeared to those who knew him best. "The pastoral charge of this Church was accepted by Dr. Rippon, August 1, 1773. He was ordained November 11th in the same year. He held the office of pastor for sixty-three years, and if it be borne in mind that his predecessor, the learned John Gill, occupied the same office for fifty-one years, it will appear that during a period of one hundred and fourteen years this church has had but two pastors. When Dr. Rippon first accepted the charge the church was worshipping in Carter Lane, Tooley Street, Southwark, but in consequence of the building of the new London Bridge they erected another edifice in New Park Street, which was opened May 6th, 1833. Dr. Rippon for a series of years occupied the pulpit with great success. As an acceptable and popular preacher, our dear pastor occupied a prominent place in the denomination for a lengthened series of years, and if in addition to the usefulness of his public ministrations, the urbanity and warm-heartedness of his private manners be considered, we may be at a loss to know whether he was more to be revered as a minister of Jesus Christ, or to be esteemed as a friend. From his long-standing in the ministry, he enjoyed an influence in his own denomination of the most flattering nature, not to advert to the general respect he acquired in other sections of the Church of Christ."

In the Baptist horizon there appears a new star whose lustre is not dimmed by the brilliancy of the great preachers of any land or age.

Robert Hall, the Chrysostom of the English pulpit, stands among the greatest of Christian orators. He was born at Arnsby in 1764, the youngest of fourteen children. His father was a minister esteemed for his piety. Like all great men, he inherited a great mother. She was a woman of refinement, imagination, and remarkable depth of character. Robert Hall did well at college in classics, philosophy and mathematics ; he simply ran away from his fellow students. At Cambridge, Leicester, and Bristol his ministry attracted general attention until he was recognised as the representative voice of the Free Churches, and upon great occasions the representative of English Christianity. In Cambridge gownsmen flocked to hear the matchless eloquence in which he clothed noble thoughts. In the region of philosophical problems, while others lost their way, he walked with the steadiness of the traveller who is familiar with the road. By the touch of his own genius and godliness he redeemed pulpit controversy from the petty personalities and bigoted ignorance which had degraded it so long. It is surprising that with so feeble a frame Robert Hall accomplished so much. During the whole of his life he was partly an invalid, compelled almost every day to lie upon his sofa for hours together in pain. He acquired the habit of composing his sermons in his mind. He could make a discourse from beginning to end perfect in its diction, without putting a note upon paper, and after delivering it to the congregation he could repeat it verbatim to a reporter. Few preachers have such a wonderful mastery of the English language. Professor Skeats says, "It is remarkable that in his writings there are none of the one-sided deficiencies that often attach to great orators."

Burke could compose almost unequalled speeches, but when he spoke what he had written he spoke to a gradually

diminishing audience, for he could speak with a fulness and power of eloquence which transfixed his hearers, but when he wrote he became weak, tame, and loose. But Hall was an equally finished writer and speaker; the rhythm of his thought lost none of its perfection because it was not perfectly spontaneous. His sentences lost none of their natural force because they were exquisitely polished. His thought lost none of its freshness and weight because it had been considered and reconsidered."

John Foster became acquainted with Mr. Hall in Bristol. He says, "His intense ardour of emotion and utterance often animated to the extreme emphasis a train of sentiments impressive by their intrinsic force, and which, as he delivered them, held dominion over every faculty of thought and feeling in a large assembly." He was a consummate master of the preacher's art. He began preaching with seeming hesitation, sometimes in a feeble voice; but as he proceeded, his easy, graceful utterances were delivered in impassioned tones, until the congregation was captured and held submissive to the speaker's will. His influence over the Baptist Church was very great. For many years his sermons formed the standard of pulpit excellence to which students looked with keen desire. Through him Baptists gained a new position in the public mind. It was not possible to sneer at the sect with which such a man had deliberately chosen to identify himself. The famous sermon which he preached when England was expecting invasion by Napoleon was said to rival the best oratory of Greece and Rome. "The Apology for the Freedom of the Press" gave him a position which was national rather than denominational. His utterance was as the song of the lark, far up in the realm of light, while the sermons of his contemporaries were like the murmurings of the doves in the shades of the wood. Dr. Chalmers tells a story which illustrates Mr. Hall's method of dealing with cantankerous hearers. A person of weight and influence in the congregation called upon

him and took him severely to task for not more frequently preaching the doctrine of predestination. Mr. Hall listened courteously, and then, looking steadily at his critic, he slowly replied, "Sir, I perceive that nature predestinated you to be an ass, and what is more, I see that you are determined to make your calling and election sure."

Next to Robert Hall stands John Foster, who became pastor of a village church near Bristol. Foster was a man of letters who strayed into the pulpit. It would be impertinent to describe the "Essays," which have been by common consent regarded as standards of literary excellence since their publication. It is not easy to find nobler thoughts in more beautiful language. As a preacher, John Foster was not a success; he shrank from publicity, and lacked some of the primary natural qualifications for the office. His experience during his brief pastorate in Dublin, given in his own words, was the same in Newcastle and Chichester, where churches dwindled under his care. "The congregation," he says, "was very small when I commenced, and almost nothing when I voluntarily closed. A dull scene it was, in which I preached with but little interest, and they heard with less." The uninterested preacher rarely interests an audience. Foster's pulpit is the Press, and his one subject is sincerity. All his writings reveal a man endeavouring to get down to the bed-rock of honesty in the affairs of the soul. Upon all topics he brought to bear a merciless logic and clear power of analysis. He refused to hold any opinion which could not stand the test of reason. In theology, he was far in advance of his times. He made the old dogma of the eternal physical torment of the wicked impossible for intelligent men. In politics he was a thorough going Radical. The comparative seclusion of his life contains but little incident. He was not a man of action. The "Essays" went through several editions in a short time, and their success determined his future work. Only through the Press can the philosopher find his public.

Honest John never gave up preaching, but he forsook the pulpit; and time has justified his choice. Dr. Landels says, "For one who now reads Hall's sermons it is supposed there are ten who read Foster's 'Essays.'" He gave occasional lectures to a select audience, which were afterwards published in two volumes.

The *Baptist Magazine* made its appearance in 1809, and continued its useful service for nearly a century. A year later the college at Stepney was instituted with the aid of the old established "Baptist Fund." Dr. W. Newman became the first president, and Robert Hall wrote the preliminary statement and appeal.

The great question among Baptists was whether unbaptised persons should be allowed to join in communion. Robert Hall was for open communion, while Fuller and Booth led the forces for "strict" communion. It was a long and weary conflict, which is not yet at an end. The Kent and Sussex Association declined to transfer numbers from their Churches to any "free and open" communion Church, as they judged "that such a Church is not a complete organised Church"! In this they agree with the Particular Baptists generally. The Association reports in ten years an increase of two hundred and eighty-one members in the seventeen churches. The leakage was considerable, one hundred and twelve members during the same period were excluded. The report is very free and frank in expressing opinions. In the "sketches" prepared by Mr. Exall there is an attempt to show the state of the mind of the preacher of the annual sermon by the character of the text from which he discoursed. Morgan preached but one. His text discovers a mind impressed with the importance of justification and sanctification. Copping is the humble disinterested follower of God.

Father Booker, as he was called, was always in his old position—the curse of the law and the comfort of the Gospel.

Attwood was a cheerful brother, yet knowing that the

treasure was in earthen vessels, he requests the prayers of the brethren.

Purdy, conscious of the importance of the ministry, magnifies his office.

Lloyd was speculative, and Slinn, a man of bold, daring disposition, trifling and factious. In justification of the last description it is recalled that "Brother Slinn" on one occasion having in vain rebuked a person for sleeping during the sermon, actually threw a pocket Bible at the sleeper.

In 1818 the Churches report that at last a fund has been established to enable the brethren to employ the gifts of the Churches in village preaching, and to afford that support to poorer Churches which should prevent their light from being extinguished. It is added that "Nine and thirty years the brethren prayed, and in the fortieth they went forward."

Woman's place in the Church seems to have been a problem to some of the brethren. The Church at Rye had long before settled the question by passing "an Act which is according to the command given by the Apostle Paul to the Church at Corinth, 1 Epst., 14, 34: Let your women keep silent in the churches." It was customary for the women to speak to the brothers upon matters "of direction, government, and authority" *before* the Church meeting, but not during the meeting, "except they ask questions or their evidence in any matter is called for." The Church at Rye was among the first to begin a "day school" for poor children.

In the north the Associations formed an evangelical society. Its object was to unite all the Independent and Baptist ministers of the four northern counties, and to establish an itinerancy to spread the Gospel both in their own immediate neighbourhood and in the more benighted parts of these counties. The scheme arose out of the success of the formation of the Baptist Home Mission Society. This society had sent to Cornwall Mr. Saffery and Mr. Steadman to preach the Gospel. The results becoming known, Baptists all over the country

began to realise the possibilities of home evangelisation. The northern churches owed much to the Angus family, whose generosity and activity became proverbial.

The British and Foreign Bible Society owed its inception to Joseph Hughes, Baptist minister at Battersea. In 1804 Mr. Hughes suggested the idea. It was immediately taken up and acted upon by all sects and parties. He was entrusted with the drawing up of the original prospectus, and to his catholic spirit and tactfulness the Society was indebted for having triumphed over the peculiar difficulties which beset the early years of its existence. For more than thirty years Mr. Hughes was its secretary. He not only fully entered into its object but lived for it.

Mr. Hughes was a member of the Baptist Church in Little Wild Street in the year 1784. He was then but sixteen years of age. Seven years later he was called to the work of the ministry, and for a time was assistant to Dr. Evans at Bristol. He was the friend and tutor of John Foster. It was his project that Foster carried out at Battersea in educating a number of boys brought from Sierra Leone to undergo a course of training, and then to be sent back as a kind of civilising missionary agency among their countrymen. Mr. Hughes felt that the best way to reach the people in any land was through their own countrymen. Mr. Hughes' influence as tutor at Bristol College helped the students to a higher ideal of culture and broader sympathies. Through his instrumentality the Baptist Church at Battersea was founded. For many years he was its minister, but the passion of his life was to spread the Scriptures in every land in the language the people could understand. He contended that the greatest missionary society was the society which sent the Gospels direct to the people. He believed that the Word of the Lord was itself sufficient to convert the soul and bring men to a knowledge of the truth.

The Baptist Associations throughout the country did much to promote co-operation among the Churches. Their condition

in 1809 is seen from the following brief review. The Oxfordshire and adjacent counties included in its Association ten Churches. The annual meeting held at Burton-on-the-Water in May reported that sixty-one persons had been added to the Churches upon profession of faith ; two had been received by letter. After deductions by death and removal a clear increase of forty-two was reported in the membership. It was agreed to recommend that a day in September be set apart for humiliation and prayer for the prosperity of our country and the return of peace. The ministers recorded their joy that, notwithstanding the tumult and devastation of war in the land with its consequent anxiety and wretchedness, they have witnessed the blessings of redeeming love and peace in their Churches.

The Norfolk and Suffolk Association, which included nine Churches, met at Bury St. Edmunds in June. From the letters it appears that considerable additions had been made to each Church, the whole number in the nine Churches being one thousand five hundred and eighty-one. One of the Churches recently established at Grundisburgh reports three hundred and eighty-nine members. In the surrounding villages a considerable number of persons have been baptised. A new Church was founded at Walton. The baptisms total one hundred and seventeen for the year.

The Northamptonshire Association, including twenty-eight Churches, held its meeting at Olney in June. Mr. Sutcliff and Mr. Fuller were the preachers. The ministers gave reports of their work and experience during the year. One hundred and forty-four members were added to the Churches, showing an increase of ninety-seven on the previous year.

The Midland Association, composed of twenty-four Churches, met at Evesham. The reports show one hundred and seventy-five additions to the members, with an increase of one hundred and five. Four new societies being formed in Shropshire, the Churches in that county signified their intention to establish a new Association.

The Western Association, composed of fifty-two Churches, held their meeting at Sodbury. Five Churches were admitted into fellowship. From the special fund a sum of over £150 was distributed to the most necessitous and laborious ministers. The public services were conducted by Mr. Saffery, of Salisbury. More than two thousand persons assembled in the burial ground, where the sermon was preached from the words, "In the sight of God speak we in Christ." The state of the Churches was reported as "peaceful and prosperous." Four hundred and twelve persons were baptised, an increase of two hundred and fifty-one.

The Yorkshire Association included twenty-eight Churches. Their assembly was held at Sheffield. In some districts there had been a revival of interest, but others lamented the lack of zeal and spirituality. Mr. Fawcett read the letter to the Churches on "the nature and extent of Christian liberty." Two hundred baptisms were reported during the year.

It is to be remembered in reading these particulars that the Associations were entirely voluntary unions, and that upwards of three hundred Baptist Churches of the same faith and order in England and Wales, beside those in London, were not united to any Association and did not make returns.

Baptists were compelled to turn their attention again to political controversy. Viscount Sidmouth, in the House of Lords, drew attention to the returns of preachers and places of worship from 1760 to 1808. He was for restricting the liberty which persons enjoyed of becoming preachers of the Christian faith and asked leave to introduce a Bill upon the subject. His lordship finally proposed that no person should be granted permission to act as a minister unless he obtained the recommendation of six respectable householders of his own denomination. Nonconformists became alarmed and organised a counter agitation.

The general body of Protestant Dissenting ministers led the forces, and the Methodists for the first time united with other

Nonconformists in a political movement. Baptists felt that their liberty was menaced; they fought valiantly. In a little more than two days, three hundred and thirty-six petitions against the Bill were ready for presentation to Parliament. The result was not only that the proposal was thrown out by the Lords without a division, but a new organisation, called "The Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty," was formed. In less than a year the repeal was obtained of the Quakers' Oaths, the Conventicle, and the Five Mile Acts, and a law was passed giving protection to Nonconforming congregations during Divine service. Baptist ministers stood with the foremost advocates of civil liberty.

Into the anti-slavery crusade Baptists entered with zeal. Their foremost representative was William Knibb, who, without the brilliance of Robert Hall and destitute of Carey's marvellous capacity for acquiring languages, rose to greatness by identifying himself with a noble cause. During his missionary work in Jamaica he was brought face to face with the horrors of slavery. His whole manhood revolted, and he vowed that he would not rest until freedom was obtained. His passionate earnestness made him eloquent while he denounced the cruelties of the system, and with tears upon his cheeks described the wrongs of the slave, until his name became indelibly written in one of the brightest chapters in our country's history—that which tells how England rose in her generosity, true to her great heart, and purchased the freedom of eighty thousand slaves. William Knibb's biography is the history of negro emancipation so far as England is concerned. At the age of seven, in the year 1810, he entered the Sunday-school at Kettering, with which he was associated until he removed to Bristol to be apprenticed to a printer. Dr. Ryland baptised him in 1822. He followed his brother Thomas to Jamaica to engage in mission school work. It was an unpromising task. The difficulties were almost overwhelming. He wrote home, "The cursed blast of slavery

has, like a pestilence, withered almost every moral bloom. I know not how any person can feel a union with such a monster, such a child of hell. For myself, I feel a burning hatred against it, and look upon it as one of the most odious monsters that ever disgraced the earth."

The authorities did all they could to restrict missionary enterprise. Mr. Knibb reports that the prayer-meeting on Wednesday mornings at daybreak is attended by nearly a thousand slaves, and many are inquiring the way of the Lord. The descriptions he gives of life in Kingston are very terrible. He prays that British Christians might see it, but no answer seems to come to his prayers. The House of Assembly passed an Act called "a consolidated slave law." It contained clauses restricting evangelical missions. The home Government refused to sanction it, and a storm of persecution broke over Mr. Knibb and his colleagues. Mr. Fowell Buxton's motion in the House of Commons on the subject of colonial slavery received the support of his Majesty's Ministers. One of its earliest results was the action of the slave-owners. Knibb was thrown into prison, charged with inciting the slaves to rebellion. He declined to leave the island, though a way of escape was communicated to him. At last the Attorney-General declared that there was no case against the missionary, and Knibb set out for England upon a holy crusade of freedom. He reached Liverpool in June, 1832. When the pilot came on board the ship, he heard that the Reform Bill had passed. "Thank God!" he said. "Now I'll have slavery down. I'll never rest day or night till I have destroyed it root and branch."

The Missionary Committee, regarding slavery as a political question, required their representatives to be silent upon the subject. There are always those ready to raise the cry, "No politics!" when vested interests are attacked. Knibb met the committee, and was advised to be prudent and temperate. He said, "Myself, my wife, and my family are entirely

dependent on the Baptist Mission. We have landed without a shilling, and may at once be reduced to penury. But, if it be necessary, I will take them by the hand and walk barefoot through the kingdom but I will make known to the Christians of England what their brethren in Jamaica are suffering." It was useless to attempt to silence such a man. At the public meeting in Spa Fields Chapel Mr. Knibb was speaking, when the prudent secretary of the Missionary Society thought he was going a little too far, and meekly pulled his coat-tails as an admonition. The touch was understood. Mr. Knibb raised his voice, and said, "Whatever be the consequences, I *will* speak. At the risk of my connection with the Society and all that I hold dear I will avow this. If the friends of missions will not hear me I will tell it to my God, nor will I desist till this greatest of curses is removed, and 'Glory to God in the highest' is inscribed on the British flag." It was a dramatic moment. The audience caught the spirit of the hero, who could not be silenced. The place rang with cheers. He told his story, how the planters in their fury had destroyed the chapels and schools because the missionaries had lifted up their voices in freedom's cause, how Baptist slaves were flogged for participating in public worship. He concluded a memorable oration by saying, "I call upon mothers by the tender sympathies of their nature; I call upon maidens by the blood-streaming back of Catherine Williams, who, with an heroism England has seldom known, preferred a dungeon to the surrender of her honour; I call upon you all by the sympathies of Jesus. If I fail of arousing your sympathies, I will retire from this meeting, and call upon Him who has made of one blood all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth, and if I die without beholding the emancipation of my brethren and sisters in Christ, then, if prayer is permitted in heaven, I will fall at the feet of the Eternal, crying, 'Lord, open the eyes of Christians in England to see the evil of slavery and to banish it from the earth.'" All England rang with the

eloquence of William Knibb ; Churches and committees, timid at first, were carried along by the contagion of courage. The slave-owners hired a Mr. Peter Borthwick, a modern Balaam, to curse the champion of the slave. Poor Peter Borthwick ! He did splendidly in the little assemblies where prejudice and personal interest made his task easy, but alas for his power, when he stood upon the same platform with William Knibb. Sincerity was trumpet-toned, while the advocate of slavery collapsed in a feeble utterance, pleading for caution in interfering with ancient customs. It was not a controversy, but a conquest. Knibb rose to the occasion. His eloquence seemed inspired. "To describe the effects of his speech," says the report, "is impossible. The building rang with deafening applause." The Baptist Churches responded with great generosity. The Government made a grant toward the loss incurred by the destruction of the mission premises, but to replace them a further sum of six thousand pounds was required. Knibb appealed to the Churches, and on the day fixed for receiving contributions nearly ten thousand pounds were realised. He returned to Jamaica. The slaves received him with great rejoicing ; and before long the news came that on August 1st, 1834, the children of slave families were to be regarded as free, but the midnight of July 31st, 1838, was to usher in the complete liberation of the whole slave population. Knibb and James Philippo led fourteen thousand adult slaves and five thousand children in a service of praise and thanksgiving. A mahogany coffin had been made, and a grave was dug. In the coffin they packed the whips, the branding irons, and the badges of their slavery ; it was screwed down. As the fateful hour of freedom dawned Mr. Knibb cried, "The monster is dying," and when the hour of twelve had struck, he exclaimed, "The monster is dead ; let us bury him ! The negro is free." The coffin was lowered into the ground. Then upon a stillness as of death there arose a great shout, followed by a succession of cries of exultation. The winds of freedom

appeared to be let loose, men and women sobbed for very joy, and William Knibb saw the accomplishment of the work to which he had consecrated his life.

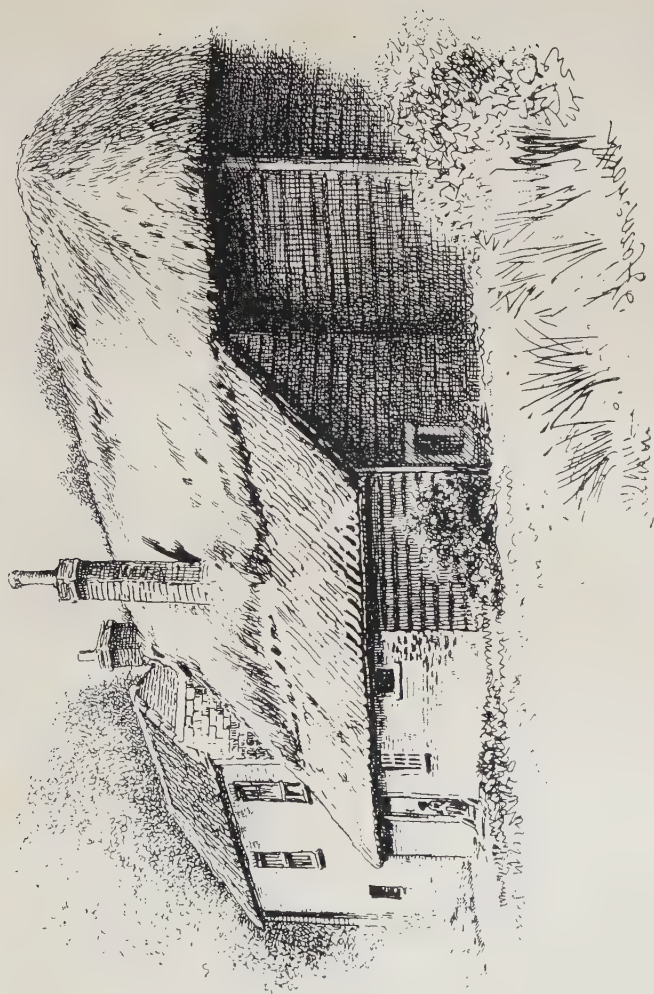
After a fourth visit to England he went back to his beloved negroes. One night after preaching he returned much exhausted to his house. It was whispered that he was ill, and a little after that he was dead. The news spread like lightning. All classes did honour to his memory. A great concourse followed his coffin in sorrow.

Forty-two years is a short life as we count age, but for William Knibb it was long enough to accomplish a task so colossal that it seems impossible, and to leave a record of heroism which time will neither obliterate nor dim.

CHAPTER XII

THE BAPTIST UNION AND ITS FOUNDERS

THE intense individualism of the Baptist faith made corporate action very difficult. Each Church was a law unto itself, fearful and resentful of outside interference. The first united effort partaking of a national character was the creation of the Missionary Society. It was fitting that the organisation which sent preachers to the heathen abroad should make the first attempt to send the Gospel to the heathen at home. In July, 1796, the Rev. P. J. Saffery, of Salisbury, and Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Steadman, were set apart to go evangelising through the whole of Cornwall. Starting from Plymouth, they held services in the towns and villages along the southern coast to Land's End, returning northward by Launceston. They preached every evening during the week and three times on Sundays, in private houses, market halls, or in the streets. Dr. Steadman describes the tour. "In several of the towns," he says, "we had from five hundred to a thousand hearers. The tinnerns are greatly inclined to hear the word, and when under it may be easily distinguished by their steady eager attention. If we may judge from appearance, the word made great impression upon many, but the nature and continuance of such impressions we seldom had the opportunity of knowing." A wave of revival swept over the villages. A year later a society was formed for the encouragement and support of itinerant and village preaching. In the address announcing its objects, the Rev. Abraham Booth says, "In these labours we will keep constantly in view the work, which is not merely to propagate a set of theological sentiments, though ever so



OLD BAPTIST CHAPEL, EYETHORNE
(in which services were held prior to 1550).

true, much less to disseminate political opinions, or to canvass the affairs of state, but in the fear of God, with much prayer, circumspection, and self-denial, to warn sinners of the wrath to come, to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to render our ungodly fellow-creatures truly wise, holy, and happy." That was the spirit in which the work was undertaken. It was greatly blessed. The success of the efforts was beyond the expectations of the founders of the Society. The Churches learned the appalling condition of the masses, how they were literally "as sheep without a shepherd." County associations took up the work, until it became necessary to change the constitution in order to make it a parent institution, with auxiliary societies throughout the country.

Baptist ministers regarded the itinerating ministry as quite distinct from the pastoral office. They did not approve of "gipsy ministry." They rarely moved from one Church to another. Their ideal was to live and die in the midst of the people whom they served in the Gospel. John Fawcett kept a school at Wainsgate, near Halifax. He was pastor of the little Church there. His attainments were considerable. He had published works in poetry and in prose which were well received by the Press, and his name was known in London. He had been invited to succeed Dr. Gill, and felt that the larger congregation would give him ampler opportunity, and the increased stipend which was offered would relieve him from anxiety. The news came to Wainsgate that Mr. Fawcett had accepted an invitation to the great city, and was leaving the Church. The day of departure arrived. The good man watched his things as they were carried from the house to the van that was to take them to London. All was ready for their departure. The wife went into the house for a last look round the old home. Men and women who had been brought to Christ under Mr. Fawcett's ministry stood in little groups with tearful faces, looking on in silence. The good woman came out. She had been weeping. "John," she said to her husband,

"I know not how to go." "Neither do I," he replied. Then turning to the carter, he said, "Put the furniture back." As soon as the men who were watching understood what was being done they lent a hand. Mr. Fawcett, when the room had been prepared, sat down and wrote :

" Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love ;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above."

Mr. Fawcett afterwards became Doctor of Divinity. He was invited to the principalship of Bristol College, but he died, as he had lived, among his own people.

The regular pastors gave time to evangelistic touring. The results of their work were seen, not only in the changed lives of their converts, but in the outcry of opposition. Men who had raised no objection to the spread of drunkenness or the presence of licentiousness among the people were very indignant that Baptist evangelists should be permitted to go from parish to parish preaching the Gospel. Bishop Horsley in his charge to the clergy of Rochester warned the people against "the French revolution, and those in England who had a similar plot to overturn the throne and the altar." County magistrates did their best to protect the country from the evangelists. In Suffolk the magistrates declined to grant licences to preachers unless they were appointed to minister to stated congregations. Preachers were warned against proclaiming the Gospel in any house not registered for the purpose. They were urged to send a notice, signed by a few respectable persons, to the Bishop's court or to the quarter sessions acquainting the authorities with their intention of holding service and asking for permission.

At Wickham Market a minister, though he had qualified under the Toleration Act, was mobbed and pelted by a crowd called together by the town-crier, who went through the district warning the people of the stranger who came to preach sedition

and reminding them of the revolution across the sea. At the service, which the evangelist persisted in holding, persons appeared in masks and grotesque attire. They carried a gallows, and placed it in front of the preacher, and told him that, if he continued for seven years, they would continue too, and at the last they would pelt him out of the Market. To show their sincerity, they immediately began to cover the good man with missiles. The undisguised sympathy of our people with American independence and the French struggles for a republic has been used to brand them as traitors to their own country. What happened in Wickham Market had taken place in Yarmouth, Birmingham, and other places. The popular ignorance had been excited by the scarcely less ignorant clergy until the cry was raised, "For Church and King" and "Down with Dissent!" Many poor Baptist domestic servants had to choose between leaving their employment and forsaking their faith. The Bishop of Rochester declared that "in many parts of the kingdom new conventicles had been opened in great numbers." Persons who encouraged them were said to be lending their aid to the enemy of souls and making themselves in effect accomplices in a conspiracy against the Lord and his Christ. Rowland Hill published a sermon in reply, because he found "that families of rank were dismissing servants and refusing to trade with Dissenters." The boycott failed. The faith for which a man suffers becomes the more cherished. The Baptists came closer together; the circumstances compelled union.

A writer in the *Baptist Magazine* for 1812 puts the case clearly. He says, "The Baptists are very numerous in England and Wales, but they know little of their own strength. In their disunited state, their importance dwindles almost to nothing." And further, "Every consideration calls on us in the most impressive manner to cry out till all our brethren hear, 'Union, Union!' Yes, union of the most extensive, firm, and durable nature." He deplores the destructive

spirit of too much independence which has reigned too long in the Churches. Another declared "the Baptists had the best cause, but the worst conducted." The trend of the times was towards union. The Churches resembled those petty states which cover whole empires under feudal dominion. They needed welding together, so that the power of each might be directed to the advantage of all, and the strength of the whole brought for the succour and defence of each. The same year a meeting was called in the vestry of Dr. Rippon's church to consider the advisability of forming a Baptist Union. The old chronicler says, "For several years past it has been thought desirable that a more general union of the Baptist Churches than has hitherto, at least for the last hundred and thirty years, existed in this country should be promoted." When the ministers came together, Dr. Ryland led them in prayer, asking for the guidance of God. Dr. Rippon was chairman, and congratulated the brethren upon the respectable attendance. He observed that for many years the representatives of the Calvinistic Baptist Churches had felt the need of a general assembly. He suggested that such an organisation should arrange collections for the support of missionaries, that it should give an account of the condition of the Churches throughout the country, that our academies could be assisted through its instrumentality in training a more efficient ministry, that the best methods of catechising young people and children in the family and the Churches could be employed, and that a fund could be started for provision for the education of the children of deceased ministers and for the support of aged pastors who were almost beyond their labours. He further suggested that such an assembly would afford the best opportunities for concerted action for the support of village preaching, of Sunday-schools, and for the establishment of penny-a-week societies. The brethren also assembled from various districts would be able to advise where new meeting-houses should be erected, and that henceforth no case for building or repairs should be

countenanced unless the consent of the ministers had been obtained.

It was a full programme presented to the consideration of the meeting. Part of it still waits effective organising. The result of the deliberations appears in a series of resolutions: "the first, that a more general union of the Particular or Calvinistic Baptist Churches in the United Kingdom is very desirable; the second, that an annual meeting be held in London or elsewhere in June." It was further agreed "that an invitation be given to the Churches and Associations to appoint messengers to the meeting; that the London ministers be the committee for the first year, with Mr. Ivimey and Mr. Button as secretaries." Mr. Hinton, of Oxford, gave an address, and Mr. Stanger, of Bessell's Green, brought the meeting to a close with prayer. Such was the origin of the Baptist Union. About sixty ministers took part in its inauguration. They were the seers of the denomination. Joseph Ivimey worked hard to make the Union a success. It struggled on until 1832 in a feeble condition. It is not quite clear that it had a continuous existence. Most of its meetings were held in the vestry of the chapel in Carter Lane. The men who did their best to quicken the corporate life of the Churches were seed-sowers. The denomination has waited long for the harvest.

Mr. Ivimey was a prominent man in his day. For twenty-nine years he was pastor of the Church in Eagle Street. At first he seems to have been very broad in his theology, but he became, as he says, upon his conversion, "the very reverse of an Arian." In 1794, while living at Portsea, he became a member of the Baptist Church in that town, which was under the pastoral care of Mr. Daniel Miall, a name that Free Churchmen will ever remember, and Mr. Joseph Horsey. Mr. Ivimey was persuaded to attempt village preaching. He records his own experience. He says, "I have spoken at Mr. Kingsford's place. It appears now as if I should never be able to speak again." He says that he had learned his own ignorance and the vast importance of the work, and wishes that he had not

been foolish enough to make the experiment. It was a good beginning for one who was to lead the forces of the Baptist denomination. Joseph Ivimey's services can hardly be over-estimated. For many years he was the moving spirit in the London Churches. He wrote an "Annual Retrospect" of the Lord's dealings with him, from which we gather that he was continually projecting literary work. His *Life of Bunyan* was popular. His "History of the English Baptists," in four volumes, is the best of its kind; yet most of his work was done while suffering from extreme bodily weakness. For a long time he was living in the expectation of death. He says, "My boxes are packed up; I feel as though waiting for the coach to call for me, and I am ready to get up into it, I hope, at a moment's warning." Many young men were encouraged in the work of the Lord by Mr. Ivimey. He had great tact in dealing with the young. In social work he was to the fore. During the time of the agitation caused by the invasion of the rights of Dissenters by Lord Sidmouth Mr. Ivimey was continually in controversy. He was in the House of Lords when the Bill was thrown out. To a gentleman standing near he remarked as Lord Liverpool, the Premier of the day, recommended the withdrawal of the measure, "That's an end of the cursed thing."

When, in 1828, Lord John Russell gave notice that he would move for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, Baptist Churches were not in a position to make the force of their support felt as they desired to do. Dr. Cox and their ministers entered upon a vigorous campaign in support of the repeal. They furthered petitions to Parliament, and when the fight was won, and the odious laws were removed from the statute book, there was great rejoicing. Baptists had suffered much from the law which made the partaking of the Lord's Supper, the feast that commemorates the death of Christ, a test of fitness for municipal service. They could not consent to the degradation of a ceremony so sacred. A banquet was held to celebrate the repeal. It took place at the Freemasons' Tavern,

and the Duke of Sussex presided. Dr. Cox had the honour of being one of the speakers in recognition of the part Baptists had taken in the campaign.

Again the desire for effective union among the Churches found expression, and in 1832 a definite effort was made to reorganise the denominational machinery. It was felt that Baptists, unless they drew closer together, would be altogether swamped by the new movements. There was an effort to give effect to the suggestion of Dr. Arnold, the great schoolmaster, who had declared "that the Church as it now stands no human power can save." He proposed to make the Church national in fact, as well as in idea, by admitting all denominations to its fold without requiring them to surrender any of their distinctive doctrines. A few Nonconformists were captivated by the idea, but not the Baptists. Their objection was to any kind of State Church. They held that the Church should be free. Their disregard for ecclesiastical machinery of any sort led them to the other extreme. In truth, there are still in the ranks of the Baptists those whose individualism is so strong that they do not care much for ecclesiastical organisations. They distrust them. Their reading of history has led them to conclude that the early disciples were united by the living ties of love and faith, and that each believer was a living exponent of his Master; that the great work of the first forty years of Christian history was not the work of an institution, but of Spirit-filled individuals. The individualists had no difficulty in showing that too often Christians had been dwarfed by the Churches, and that the growth of organisation was proportionate to the decadence of godliness. They believed that the Church was often the most effective barrier to the spread of Christianity. There was much to be said in support of their views. Their opposition was not only to the Baptist Union but to any union likely to become strong enough to control individual action. To meet men of this type, it was found necessary to make the clearest declarations that the Union did not intend to set up an authoritative creed, or to prescribe any

law for the Churches, but that all action was voluntary. The advocates of co-operation succeeded at least in part, and the Baptist Union was placed upon a firmer foundation. Its declaration of principle, which is still retained, is, that "in this Union it is fully recognised that every separate Church has liberty to interpret and administer the laws of Christ, and that the immersion of believers is the only Christian baptism." Two years later Joseph Ivimey went to his reward gladdened by the knowledge that at last there were signs of some result of the struggles to bring the denomination into effective cohesion. The slow, but sure, process of centralisation really commenced in 1832.

Joseph Lancaster's scheme for educating the poor had received some encouragement from the King, and the people took favourably to it. The institution which afterwards became the British and Foreign School Society established elementary schools of an unsectarian religious character wherever there was an opening. Baptists supported the work. Very soon the scheme was opposed. The clergy denounced it, mistaking its character perhaps from the fact that its founder and warmest supporters were Nonconformists. It was seriously asked what more deadly attack could be made upon religion than teaching children to read the Bible without prescribing the gloss and commentary which Episcopacy had sanctioned. The National School Society was started to educate the children of the poor in the teaching of the Church of England. The religious question from the first was the stumbling-block in the way of national education. Many Baptists contended that the State was not the proper authority to give religious instruction, that it was the duty of the State to provide secular education only, and that upon the Churches and parents rested the obligation to teach the children religion.

The attacks upon Nonconformity were such as to make it necessary to form a Protestant society for the protection of religious liberty. By force of circumstances Baptists were

compelled to draw closer together. The work done by their poor evangelists through the Home Mission Society was an object lesson of the possibilities of co-operation. We may tabulate some of the results of the itinerating Baptists. Eighty-eight mission churches still remain to testify to the value of the early efforts. There are twenty-five mission stations. In these Churches there are over four thousand communicants, and nearly ten thousand persons in attendance at the services, with about two thousand young people in the Sunday-school and Bible-classes. With the success of the Home Missions before them and the knowledge that in London the Baptist Churches numbered forty-two in all, and some of them were weaker in numbers and influence than in the days of the Commonwealth, the Churches were forced to the conclusion that their strength was in co-operation. They could refer to Devonshire Square and Salters' Hall as ancient meeting-houses whose light was not dimmed, but an impartial observer would be forced to the conclusion that the Baptists were not making headway.

In 1832 the Union took a new lease of life. A meeting was called to consider the outlook. It met just before William Knibb delivered his address upon slavery in Jamaica. A chronicler of the time says : "The extraordinary excitement of this meeting unfitted most persons who were present for subsequent services." It was agreed to ask for a return of the Churches and a comparison of their condition in 1790 and 1831. The speakers were Messrs. Smith, of Ilford, Rogers, of Eynsford, Shirley, of Sevenoaks, Thompson, and Upton. There was a deep note of dissatisfaction when the return was published. It was clear that the denomination had suffered much from the lack of necessary means of communication and co-operation between the Churches. In 1790 there were three hundred and thirty-four Churches and sixty-five pastors ; in 1831 there were nine hundred and twenty Churches and two hundred and eighty-four pastors. The report adds : "It is obvious that such a list as this can furnish but a very

uncertain criterion of the degree in which the Baptist denomination has been enlarged during this term. In some cases the multiplication of Churches is an actual diminution of strength. In many country places there were forty years ago large and prosperous Churches, a considerable proportion of whose members dwelt in surrounding villages, where now in each village there is a distinct Church, but not an increase in the aggregate of members at all proportioned to the increase in the number of Churches; while, on the other hand, in some districts in which the additional number of Churches is small, the increased magnitude of each Church is very important." Mr. Hinton delivered an eloquent address upon the gains of union, and the ministers passed resolutions pledging themselves to support the attempt at federation.

In London the Churches were holding their own, and perhaps a little more enthusiasm was manifested in the cause of union. The London Baptist Building Fund was engaged in collecting moneys to aid in the erection of new chapels. During six months of the year a sum of £595 had been paid to eleven Churches toward the erection of their places of worship. There were other urgent applications for aid before the committee, and an appeal was made for further help, on the grounds that the needs were pressing, and that contributing through a central fund would make it unnecessary for pastors to undertake long journeys to collect subscriptions, that their time could be better employed in attending to the needs of their people, and that business men would be relieved "from the painful interruptions to which they used to be subjected in the midst of their worldly avocations" by those who called for contributions.

The Rev. James Upton was appointed President of the Union. His name is honoured, not only for his own, but for his father's sake. He entered the ministry through the influence of Mr. John Davis, the pastor at Reading, whose quiet work was seen in the number of young men who gave their lives to the service of God through his instrumentality.

Mr. Upton, a man of gentle disposition and rare devotion, was the son of the minister of the Church in Church Street, Blackfriars, with whom twelve persons had united in fellowship when the work began in Green Walk. Before his death, Mr. Upton senior had seen a new building erected and enlarged and enlarged again, and the twelve Church members had been multiplied to over four hundred. The son of such a father could hardly be less than an energetic minister. In the wider service of the Baptist Union, during his presidency, we are not able to follow him, but among Particular Baptists his name became a household word.

The first secretary, Dr. Belcher, continued in office for eight years, before his removal to the United States. He contributed largely to denominational literature, but does not seem to have been gifted with the power of organisation. Notwithstanding the efforts of the ministers, the Churches were slow in accepting the new order. It was necessary to make repeated declarations that the Union had no intentions of superseding the authority of the individual Church, and that the association was voluntary.

In 1834, Dr. Murch joined Dr. Belcher in the secretarial work. His services to the denomination were manifold. For a while, he was principal of Stepney College. He possessed a certain stateliness of manner which gave at first a false impression of what was really a sweet and gentle personality. He was a great stickler for proprieties and order. His chief work was not in the office of the Baptist Union, but in the classroom. Continually he was urging that the solution of the problems of the Baptist Churches was to be found in the pulpit. One of his last utterances was: "I intreat you to send to our colleges men full of humane and Christian sympathy, who can feel for the perishing millions around them, and whose living voices shall pierce through the vast sepulchres of the spiritually dead." For a number of years Dr. Murch ministered to a little Church at Rickmansworth. Upon three occasions he was President of the Union. He continued as Secretary until 1859, the year of his death.

Another prominent figure was Dr. Benjamin Davies, who succeeded to the principalship of Stepney College. He was not an orator—he cared much more for verbal accuracy than for the arts of the rhetorician. He was a profound scholar, and to the last a keen student. In examining a Hebrew word, he was as painstaking and as scientific as a physician scrutinising a cell in which some foreign element appeared that might contain the germ of life or death. To him every word of Scripture had a meaning definite and single, to be ascertained according to the fixed laws and rules of human speech. Dr. Davies was one of the men to whose memory Nonconformity has not yet done justice. We have so many saints that we do not even try to hold their names in remembrance. Dr. Davies studied at Leipsic University, where he graduated doctor of philosophy. He was also LL.D. of Dublin. Reserved and quiet in his manner, of great simplicity of character, he was nevertheless a great soul. An illustration of his accurate scholarship may be retold. With Dr. Angus, he was present at a reception given at the college, when an eminent German was the guest of the evening. Finding it difficult to converse with Dr. Angus in his own language, the visitor tried French and then Latin. The Doctor, himself no mean linguist, had some difficulty in keeping up the conversation. He turned in search of Dr. Davies, and introduced him as a gentleman likely to reply in any language in which he might be addressed. The conversation continued in various tongues, until the German came to the end of his great stock of words, and Dr. Davies upheld the honour of the college by speaking in two languages in which no answer was given.

John Howard Hinton was called to the Chair of the Union the year in which Queen Victoria came to the throne. He was the son of James Hinton, who kept school and ministered to the Church at Oxford. His mother was a daughter of Isaac Taylor, an eminent engraver, and a friend of the philanthropist, John Howard. When upon his last journey, Howard was about to leave England, he said to Mrs. Hinton, "I have now no son of

my own. If ever you have a son, pray call him after me." She remembered the words, and when on March 24th, 1791, her boy was born, he inherited the name, John Howard. During his student life, Mr. Hinton intended to devote himself to medicine, but when the call came to enter the ministry he responded by applying to Bristol College. After two years he went to Edinburgh University. He graduated M.A. and accepted the pastorate of the Church in Haverfordwest in 1816. From there, he removed to Reading four years later, and in 1837, he became pastor of the Church meeting in Devonshire Square, Bishopsgate. His influence was already widely spread. During his London pastorate it was greatly extended. In the cause of missions he was earnest and constant in his advocacy. To the Baptist Union he gave some of his best thought and work. Though necessarily one so much engaged had little time at his disposal, a list of his works shows the range of his thinking in philosophy and theology. No Baptist of his time produced so much. As a traveller he was familiar with the habits of the people as well as the geography of the lands through which he passed. He wrote a volume of "Letters on Holland and North Germany," a "History of the United States of North America," a "Harmony of Religious Truth and Human Reason," a book on the "Elements of Natural History," besides a "System of Theology," and a work on "Redemption." His theological works were afterwards collected and published in seven volumes. He was also the author of several hundred hymns, prepared for the most part for use in connection with his sermons. He published "Hymns by a Minister," a collection of 116 hymns. Upon the attainment of his seventieth year, a meeting was held in the Mission House, Moorgate Street, to present him with a substantial token of the regard of his friends. It was said that John Howard Hinton belonged not to Devonshire Square alone, but to England. Dr. Angus, in a speech upon the occasion, affirmed that "Mr. Hinton possesses the clearest logical faculty that God ever created." The many volumes

bearing Mr. Hinton's name go far to prove that Dr. Angus had some justification for his statement. Mr. Hinton was ever a fighter. Controversy was food to him. On the village green he would preach to a rustic audience, setting forth the principles he held dear. Though parson or squire might order him off, or interfere, he was not to be daunted. He would overwhelm and overawe any opposition, so that upon the platform at a great meeting, in the open air, or in committee he was a force to be reckoned with. A keen controversialist seldom makes a good secretary. Mr. Hinton's excellencies upon the platform were his limitations in the committee room. He resigned the secretaryship in 1866, and seven years after was called home.

Dr. Steane was a convert under the ministry of James Hinton, of whose church his father was a deacon. Very early he determined to enter the ministry. His preparation was undertaken at Bristol and Edinburgh. In 1823 he came to London, or rather, as it was then described, "to Camberwell, in the suburbs, not far from London." He ministered to the Church for over forty years, and was succeeded by Charles Stanford, of sweet and honoured memory. There was scarcely any denominational movement of importance in which Dr. Steane did not take a prominent part. He was one of the originators of the Bible Translation Society. For a long period he was its secretary, and afterwards its treasurer. To his activity the Evangelical Alliance owed much. He was in part its author and for a number of years the editor of its organ, *Evangelical Christendom*. Many of his sermons, which were published, were preached upon special occasions. He was the author of a volume on "The Doctrine of Christ Developed by the Apostles." During his term of office as Secretary of the Union the Chartist movement caused trouble in a number of the Churches. The sympathies of the Baptists were expressed by Thomas Cooper, who afterwards found an honoured place in their ministry. Mr. Cooper, while engaged as a journeyman shoemaker, studied Hebrew and Greek. He seems to have

divided his life between the claims of study and social reform. The Chartist movement gripped his sympathies, and he became the voice of the working men. It is difficult to conceive the condition of the people of the period. A pessimistic observer might have described society as an idle aristocracy, a plutocracy callously engaged in money getting, while the masses were sullenly smouldering in discontent. Mr. J. S. Mill wrote of the better classes, as they were called, as follows:—"There has crept over the whole class of gentlemen in England a moral effeminacy, an inaptitude for any kind of struggle. They shrink from all effort, from everything which is troublesome and disagreeable."

It would be hardly possible to find two men more widely apart than Dr. Steane and Thomas Cooper, yet they were close together. Their differences were all on the surface. Dr. Steane raised his voice for the people, and helped to give the Baptist Churches a lead in the direction of social reform. In 1862, Dr. Steane retired to Rickmansworth, where he lived for twenty years, a fine old man, the representative of a type all too rare in our time.

A list of the Presidents of the Union would provide material for a number of volumes of interesting biography. We cannot even record the names of all the men of faith who have rendered noble service through the Baptist denomination. Mr. Cramp, of St. Peters, introduced the Gospel to the district in which he lived. He carried on a school, and preached; and gathering the people, he secured a piece of ground known as the "Pit in the Shallows," upon which to build the first Particular Baptist Church in the Isle of Thanet. Tradition says that long before, the Anabaptists had worshipped in the secluded neighbourhood of the Pit. The name of Cramp is known in connection with a Baptist History, and in Canada, where Mr. Cramp ministered for a number of years, his name remains fragrant still.

In 1844, the Baptist Union sent two delegates, Charles Stovel and J. P. Mursell, to the Conference of the Anti-State-Church Association, which afterwards became known as the

Liberation Society. It is recorded upon the minutes that the only denomination sending delegates officially was the Baptist. Mr. Stovel was pastor at Woolwich, and afterwards at Little Prescott Street. The father of Alexander Maclaren, when he thought seriously about helping his boy into the ministry, talked over the matter with Mr. Stovel, who, after due consideration as to whether Alexander would make a minister or not, said, with almost Scotch caution, "Well, well, perhaps he might." Upon the platform, Mr. Stovel was well known. His lectures upon the Baptismal Controversy and Baptismal Regeneration might still be studied by students for the ministry. Mr. Mursell was the Bishop of Leicestershire. The Nonconformists outside his own denomination accepted his utterances with as much loyalty as the clergy took their orders from their superiors. Mr. Stovel played a prominent part in the skirmish of the conflict between Protestantism and the new Catholicism. The State Church was emerging from its long sleep of apathy. The chilling touch of its indifference had dwarfed noble ideals, sympathy with suffering and the power of sacrifice into a decorous sense of duty and a sleepy performance of routine. But the old order was giving place to the new. The men of the Oxford Movement were making their influence felt; they issued the "Tracts for the Times," a series of short papers, setting forth the new Catholicism. Dr. Pusey, in his "Tract on Baptism" says, "The plain letter of Scripture says, 'we are saved by baptism,' and men say, 'We are not saved by baptism.' Our Lord says a man must be born of water and the Spirit; man says that he need not, cannot be born of water. Scripture, that we are saved by the washing of regeneration; man, that we are not, but by regeneration, which is as a washing. Scripture, that we are baptised for the remission of sins; man, that we are not, but to attest that remission. Scripture, that whosoever has been baptised into Christ hath put on Christ; man, that he hath not. Scripture, that they have been buried with Him by baptism into death; man, that they have not. Scripture,

that Christ cleansed the Church by the washing of water by the word ; man, that He did not, for bare elements could have no such virtue. Scripture, that we were baptised into one body ; men, that we were not, but that we were in that body before. Surely, they have entered into a most perilous path which, unless they are checked in pursuing it, must end in the rejection of all Scripture truth which does not square with their own previous opinions. It did once so end, and it is a wholesome, but awful warning, for those who will be warned, that it was out of the school of Calvin, from familiar intercourse with him and the so-called 'Reformed Church,' that it was out of and through the Reformed Doctrine that Socinianism took its rise."

This teaching was a challenge especially to the Baptists ; they took it up at once. Their leaders made the country ring with the repudiation of salvation by the act of a priest. Henceforth the doctrine and practice advocated by the new party were keenly discussed. The writers were men of splendid energy, great ability and passionate zeal. Newman, Pusey and Keble led the van, and were followed by a devoted and able band. The secession of some of the leaders from the National Church to the Church of Rome, notably that of J. H. Newman, awoke a sense of danger, almost of panic. Ritualism and sacerdotalism were the subjects of conversation everywhere. The replies were for the most part feeble. They lacked that whole-hearted conviction which characterised Pusey and Keble, if not Newman. In the controversy, the Baptists had an enormous advantage, seeing that they rejected entirely the authority of tradition. Their leaders had a magnificent opportunity ; a few of them made the most of it. They insisted that infant baptism was so associated in the popular mind with superstitious ideas of regeneration that it was impossible to retain the ceremony without the superstition. They rejected tradition as a binding authority upon the Churches, and insisted that Christians had no right to alter either of the rites Christ had given. They urged that the Roman Catholic had as much

justification in changing the Supper into the Mass, as the Protestant Churches had for changing immersion, the declaration of the believer's faith in Christ, into the ceremony of sprinkling an unconscious child, who was necessarily without faith. One of the results was controversy among the Free Churches upon the meaning of baptism. A new position was taken up, which has since become very popular outside the Baptist denomination. It changes the idea of the baptism of children into a dedication service, and at once gets rid of the suggestion of baptismal regeneration by omitting all that is essential to baptism.

Denominational agencies grew slowly. The Baptist Tract and Book Society was formed in 1841 to disseminate the Gospel and the teaching of the New Testament concerning baptism. Publications which could not otherwise have been issued have come from its press. It did useful work, but upon a small scale. The duty on paper was very heavy, and until its repeal in 1861, education by means of cheap literature was impossible. For a long time, the Society stood outside the Baptist Union. It lacked spirited enterprise. Happily, its leaders have been wise enough to make it part of the denominational machinery controlled by the Union.

Special funds were created to meet growing needs. Among the most useful was the Annuity Fund, a form of insurance supplemented by donations. Through its beneficent operations, many an aged servant of the Churches has been enabled to spend the sunset of his life in comfort, without being compelled to seek the assistance of the Poor Law. Associated with the Annuity Fund is the name of the Rev. C. M. Birrell, of Liverpool. To his eloquent advocacy, the fund largely owes its existence. Mr. Birrell was the father of the author of "Obiter Dicta," the brilliant Radical barrister. The Augmentation Fund for assisting poor Churches was advocated in 1877 by the Rev. Charles Williams, for fifty years minister of the Church at Accrington. He was supported by C. H. Spurgeon and others, but the Union at first feared to undertake so

great a task. The "Baptist Handbook" gives a long list of denominational organisations. A little imagination would make the dry bones live, and tell their story with pathos and power.

Nonconformity, though timid and slow, was beginning to respond to the new forces which were making for national progress and the people's redemption. *The Nonconformist*, established by Mr. Edward Miall, was infusing new ideas and advocating an aggressive policy. Though it did not meet with the success it merited, yet it compelled the Churches to face the gloomy facts concerning their condition and outlook. The Baptist Union, at its annual assembly in 1844, passed a series of resolutions which tell their own story as to the state of the most progressive of the Nonconforming bodies. The first resolution expresses regret that "the average increase of the year has been somewhat less than six members for each Church, being the smallest clear annual increase since 1838." The second resolution is an attempt to weaken the first. It is that "the Union without listening to any suggestions of despondency, or yielding to any feelings of discouragements, would seriously commend this state of things to the prayerful consideration of the Churches, and engage them to renewed exercises of watchful zeal and fervent supplication." The committee expressed regret that the balance against them had been augmented during the year by more than thirty pounds. They ask that the Churches will remember that their increased expenditure has arisen from the enlarged activity into which they have been called, and will direct their little regard toward their pecuniary necessities. It was a depressing report. Of course, Mr. Hinton and Mr. Stovel made the best of a bad case, but they did not see that they were fighting with almost useless weapons; the old organisation was not adapted to the new needs.

In 1845, the Strict Baptists determined to have an organisation of their own. The Baptist Evangelical Society was formed; it aimed at educating young men for the ministry by placing them under the care of accredited pastors. It also gave

assistance to weaker Churches, in which the "doctrines of grace" were proclaimed. Dr. John Stock was its chief advocate. He was a preacher of considerable ability and attainments, a strong personality, and an effective organiser. The German Baptist Mission was inaugurated by the Strict section, and Manchester College grew out of the attempts to educate men for the ministry. It has about twenty students, with Professor J. T. Marshall, M.A., D.D., for its President and Theological Tutor. Strict Baptists still stand aloof from their brethren of the same denomination. They have rendered good service in their fidelity to their conception of truth. They have at least shown the courage of their convictions, and have made sacrifices for their cause. Their numbers have dwindled during recent years, though they still count a considerable number of churches in London and in the provinces, and are responsible for a number of philanthropic institutions mainly for the benefit of their own people.

John Eustace Giles was one of the founders of the Baptist Union who saw its re-organisation in 1832, and watched its progress for a number of years. He deserves greater recognition than he has received. His early education was obtained in the private school of the Rev. James Hinton, at Oxford. In his 20th year, he was baptised by his father at Dartmouth, where he was born in 1805, and where his father ministered for many years. He became a member of the Church at Chatham, to which his father removed. From there, he went to Bristol College. At the conclusion of his course, he became minister of Salters' Hall Chapel, from which he removed to South Parade, Leeds, in 1836. During his pastorate, he devoted much of his time to the work of social reform and to efforts to secure civil and religious liberty. He went to Hamburg with Dr. Acworth to plead with the authorities on behalf of the persecuted Baptists. Later, he went to Denmark to plead with the King on behalf of the Baptists in that kingdom who suffered for conscience sake. During the Anti-Corn Law Agitation, he played a prominent part in the people's cause.

He joined the agitators who sang the revolutionary song, "God save the people," which has since become a favourite hymn among the Baptists. Mr. Giles was regarded as a political parson, though it would be difficult to discover the political party to which he belonged. He was one of the pioneers who believed that it is often needful to be political in order to give expression to one's religious convictions. With Ebenezer Elliott of honoured memory, he helped to lead the workers a step nearer their emancipation. He held pastorates in Bristol and Sheffield, but his popularity in the people's cause made him unpopular in many of the churches. After ministering in Dublin, he returned to London, and became pastor of the church at Clapham Common, where he remained until his death in 1875. He possessed pulpit talent of a very high order, and did not hesitate to risk the loss of everything by his advocacy of forlorn hopes and unpopular measures. His life was one of great usefulness. Among his published works is a volume on "Socialism" and another on the "Spirit of Faith." He was a contributor to the *Eclectic Review*, and the author of several hymns, one of which was written at the request of the Baptist Missionary Society, to be used at the service for the celebration of the negroes' emancipation. Perhaps the most popular of his hymns was the one written during a serious illness in 1830, to be sung by some converts at their baptism. It begins—

"Hast thou said, exalted Jesus,
 'Take thy cross and follow me?'
Shall the word with terror seize us?
Shall we from the burden flee?
 Lord, I take it,
And, rejoicing, follow Thee."

Joseph Tritton was a man of another type. For a number of years he was treasurer of the Missionary Society, and contributed largely to its funds. The Baptist denomination owes much to Mr. Tritton's generosity and not less to his character. He was born at Battersea in 1819. His father was a member of the Church under the care of Joseph Hughes, and was a

friend of John Foster. Mr. Tritton was for upwards of forty years a partner in the well-known banking house of Barclay, Bevan, Tritton & Co. His wealth did not draw him aside from his duty; he took great interest in the asylum for fatherless children, and, indeed, in most of the philanthropic movements of his time. He was a great admirer of Mr. Spurgeon, and wrote two of the hymns which were sung at the opening of the Metropolitan Tabernacle.

The work of the Baptist Union struggled on with varying success. The secretaries did their best, but far too much devolved upon them. Mr. Millard was called to office in 1863, and continued until Dr. Booth accepted the position in 1877; but after two years it was found necessary to release Dr. Booth from his engagement. Then the Rev. William Sampson, who had served the Missionary Society in India, and upon his return to England had been successfully occupied in building a new church at Folkestone, accepted the position of secretary. The anxieties and difficulties of the office told upon Mr. Sampson from the first, and in two years he laid his service down to enter upon the heavenly reward. Dr. Booth was prevailed upon to return to the position, which he did, and until his retirement in 1898 he might have been found almost any day, and frequently at any hour of the day, in his office at the top of the building in Funnival Street engaged in some work for the churches. Dr. Booth's amiability of disposition and extensive knowledge of the ministers and congregations enabled him to prepare the path along which others have travelled since his death. In the work of the office he had associated with him Mr. Avery, who had been pastor of the church at Praed Street in connection with Dr. Clifford. Mr. Avery relinquished his position when Mr. Shakespeare was appointed secretary, but the denomination does not forget the debt it owes to those who did the work in the old days when the enthusiasm was small, and the helpers few in comparison with the present. With the passing of Dr. Booth the old order closed for the Baptist Union.

CHAPTER XIII

C. H. SPURGEON AND THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE

It was a great day for the Baptist denomination, and, indeed, for the world, when C. H. Spurgeon came to the pulpit in New Park Street. The scanty congregation, when they saw the country-looking lad ascend the pulpit stairs, had little idea that the "prince of preachers" was that morning coming to his throne. Mr. Spurgeon had been labouring at Waterbeach, and was already known as a preacher by the people of Cambridge. His little church paid him £40 a year, so that to supplement his income he resided in the city and took to teaching. Previously, he had been engaged as usher in a school at Newmarket, where he had given great satisfaction by his ability to teach and his amiability of manner. After his conversion in the little Primitive Methodist Chapel in Colchester, where the local preacher, whose name is unknown, was God's messenger to call him into the kingdom, he began preaching and immediately became popular. On May 3rd, 1850, he walked a distance of eight miles from Newmarket to Isleham Ferry, and was there baptised in the river by Mr. Cantlow. From that time he became a preacher in the villages. Feeling his inefficiency for pulpit work, he wrote to Dr. Angus, the then principal of the Regent's Park College. Dr. Angus arranged to meet Mr. Spurgeon at the house of a friend in Cambridge. The Doctor kept his appointment; so did Mr. Spurgeon; but they were shown into separate rooms. They waited until both were tired, and then left without seeing each other. Mr. Spurgeon continued his work in country chapels. One Sunday morning, upon his arrival at the chapel at

Waterbeach, he found a letter addressed to him that contained an invitation to preach at New Park Street. After much prayer he decided to go. His experience as a pulpit supply was not promising. He was entertained, or rather lodgings were provided for him, at a boarding house. The unmistakable country cut of his garments, the coloured pocket handkerchief, and the unconventional style of the youth did not create a favourable impression upon the company at the boarding house. They sought to awe him by relating the wonderful performances of the London preachers. He had a sleepless night and in the morning wished himself back with his country congregation.

The metropolis to which Mr. Spurgeon came seems very far off now. The Thames Embankment and Holborn Viaduct had yet to be made. Many of the great thoroughfares were dingy streets. The pulpit at the time would seem as antiquated as the greater part of the city. In South London the most prominent Baptist was James Wells, of the Surrey Tabernacle. He had been driver of a carrier's waggon on the London Road. The Lord called him from the box of the cart to the pulpit. He was a man of great natural gifts and indomitable energy. After his conversion he worked hard until he had learned to speak fluently in good English, and by the kindness of the accomplished Edward Andrews, who became his tutor, he acquired enough Greek and Hebrew to read the Bible in the original languages. His acquaintance with Calvinistic theology was extensive; yet it must be confessed that he never lost the vulgar note in his speech. His shrewd commonsense and close acquaintance with the needs of the people, added to a keen sense of humour, made him a great power. The beautiful tabernacle, in which he ministered, was built and paid for mainly by the exertions of working men, charwomen, and shop girls, who could not give without sacrifice. Mr. Wells was a man of the common people, and that, in addition to his clear enunciation of the theology which has ever been the comfort of the disappointed in life's battles, made him a great power. He

did not like what he described as "duty faith," and he resented the advent of C. H. Spurgeon, "the young man round the corner." Paxton Hood paints a grim picture of the famous Jimmy Wells. He describes him as a man "who could make a mob of bumpkins laugh at a village fair, a sort of cheap jack in the pulpit." But Mr. Hood was hopelessly mistaken. It was not coarse humour that brought thousands of people to listen to Mr. Wells. It was for better reasons that the streets were lined by greater crowds on the day of Mr. Wells's funeral than on Thanksgiving Day. Three thousand persons were crowded into the Surrey Tabernacle at the funeral service, and nearly every one of them wept for the loss of a personal friend.

Mr. Spurgeon created a sensation in the little congregation in New Park Street. It seemed as if the decorous deacons and Church members were dumbfounded by the presence of a young fellow in the pulpit of the stately Dr. Rippon, who dared to set aside the conventional ideas of preaching, and spoke the common speech of the people, and displayed striking originality, such as the congregation had never known before. Mr. Spurgeon was invited again. At the end of 1854 he wrote his acceptance of the call to the pastorate. It was an eventful year. London was swept by cholera, the nation was at war with Russia, and the metropolis felt the depression. Such a time presented an opportunity to the new minister. He used it to the full. Within a year it was absolutely necessary to find a larger building for the crowds that came to New Park Street. Exeter Hall was taken, and Spurgeon became, as he remained until his death, London's greatest preacher. Since the days of Whitefield no voice had such power with the people. The old preachers did not take kindly to the young man. Mr. Binney, who was then at the height of his influence at Weigh-house Chapel, on a public platform declared his disapproval. He said, "There is a young man, quite a boy, talking in a most confused and incoherent manner, without logic or consistency, and all London seems to be going with him." The

latter part of Mr. Binney's statement was certainly true. The pompous phrases of the old preachers, who had taken Dr. Johnson as their model, were left behind by the new preacher. He created a revolution in the pulpit. It was said, "Spurgeon has gone up like a rocket, he will come down like a stick." He himself said, "I never sought popularity, and now to please the polite critic shall I leave the people, who so much require the simple and stirring style?" He went on, "I am perhaps vulgar and so on, but it is not intentional save that I must and will make the people listen. My firm conviction is that we have quite enough polite preachers, and that the many require a change. God has owned me to the most degraded and off-cast. Let others serve their class; these are mine and to them I must keep." The Press discussed Spurgeon. With few exceptions the criticisms were caricatures. The *Christian World* defended him, and the *Morning Advertiser*, though the organ of the drink traffic, took the same side. In the booksellers' windows were displayed comic sketches of Mr. Spurgeon. The most popular caricature was, perhaps, "Brimstone and Treacle," or, "Catch 'em alive O!" In after years the great preacher showed his friends his extensive collection of humorous prints in which he figured at the time. From Exeter Hall the services were removed to the Royal Surrey Gardens. The building, with its three tiers of immense galleries, would seat twelve thousand persons. The first service was held on October 19th, 1856. Not only the hall but the road was densely crowded upon that evening. Since Wesley, no preacher had faced such an audience. The story of the awful panic and calamity is well-known. Somebody raised the cry of fire, somebody else by accident broke a window, and then a stampede was made for the doors. The staircases were blocked, men and women fell over each other and lay in a heap at the bottom, while the thoughtless crowd trampled over their bodies. Seven were killed; a large number were severely injured.

The effect of the terrible catastrophe upon the preacher threatened his reason. It was necessary to take him away quietly. During his absence, the old crusade of calumny was revived. He was represented as Punch in the pulpit by Mr. Cater, who earned for himself lasting disgrace. A few preachers joined in the chorus of disapprobation. Their criticism upon Mr. Spurgeon's preaching recalls Dr. Johnson's verdict upon Milton's poem "Lycidas," that "it is no poem at all," with Matthew Arnold's comment, that "such a sentence is terrible for the critic." By the end of November, Mr. Spurgeon returned to the Music Hall. The crowd came again. The common people heard the preacher gladly, but all classes contributed to the audience. Distinguished representatives of literature, science, art, and politics were recognised in the crowd. The services continued in public buildings, until the opening of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in the spring of 1861. Mr. Spurgeon preached the first sermon and Dr. Brock preached in the evening. At the public meeting, Sir Henry Havelock presided, and an oration upon Nonconformist principles was delivered by Henry Vincent.

At the close of the opening services, the Tabernacle, which had cost about £32,000, was entirely free from debt. It was a happy arrangement that the building was erected by the late William Higgs, who subsequently became a deacon of the Church, and a generous supporter of its institutions. Mr. Spurgeon's ministry in the Tabernacle is still more than a memory. Many questioned whether he would continue to hold the people. The answer was seen in the congregations that continued to overflow the building until the last service Mr. Spurgeon conducted. The pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle was in many ways a typical Englishman. His burly form and genial gaze reminded one of the gentleman farmer out for a holiday. His tender, lustrous eyes seemed ever full of quiet fun or tears. He had the finest voice of any public man of his time. Its power, pathos, and rich variety

of tone charmed the largest audiences. He could whisper to music and speak so that thirty thousand persons could hear a sermon delivered in the open air. Those who frequently heard the greatest of the English puritans hardly realised the wonderful charm of his voice, until it was hushed in the silence and another spoke in his place. About Mr. Spurgeon there was a rugged grandeur and transparent honesty of purpose. In his speech, there was the beauty of the living artist in word-painting; but that was forgotten in the stern sense of righteousness and the magnetic sympathy which yearned to lift human souls above sorrow and sin. He was in the pulpit what Carlyle was in the realm of letters, and more. John Ploughman's wit, treasured up in "Ploughman's Pictures," "Salt Cellars," "Sermons in Candles," and countless memories, played upon the surface of the discourses as the foam on the waves, and, like the foam, it told of the force of the current. Mr. Spurgeon did not hesitate to make his congregation laugh, but the laugh was not the end. It was only the means. Spurgeon's courage is well-known. He might have used the heroic utterance of Curran, who, when he heard the clatter of the weapons of his foes in court, exclaimed, "You may assassinate me, but you cannot intimidate me."

It was well-known that Mr. Spurgeon's favourite institution was the first of the organisations which expressed his personality. The Pastors' College became a necessity. Young men converted under the ministry of Mr. Spurgeon came to him, desiring to devote their lives to the preaching of the Gospel. He determined to help the new recruits to use the old weapons, and to carry the war into the enemy's camp. His first student was Mr. T. W. Medhurst, who is still in the ministry at Cardiff. Mr. Spurgeon was so enthusiastic about the College that he seriously contemplated disposing of his horses and carriage to provide the money for the work. His more cautious friends would not allow this. Mr. William Olney, next to the

president, did most for the College. He was a leather factor in Bermondsey, closely in touch with the people, a man of strong faith and gentle spirit. The poor loved him, and the children looked for his smile. To Mr. Spurgeon he was a loyal comrade. A supper party was arranged, and after the meal Mr. Spurgeon explained his idea of founding a college, which should not make preachers, but should seek to provide a better equipment for Christian men who had shown preaching ability. The guests gave generous subscriptions, and this grew into the annual college supper, at which more than £3,000 has occasionally been collected. The first tutor was the Rev. George Rogers, who was pastor of a Congregational Church in Camberwell. He was a puritan after Mr. Spurgeon's own heart. One of his ancestors was known as Roaring Rogers, in the days of the Commonwealth. He had been co-pastor with John Clayton at the old Weigh House Chapel. It was said of Mr. Rogers when he became principal of Spurgeon's College that had he foreseen his present position, he could not have conducted his studies more directly to that end. Mr. Rogers, for a while, did all the tutorial work, but the College grew. From 1861 to the year 1874, the classes were held in the rooms underneath the Tabernacle. The present buildings were erected at a cost of £15,000. Mr. Rogers lectured upon theology and Church history. He retained the principalship until his 80th year, when, soon after his retirement, he was called home, in 1891. Mr. Gracey succeeded him. His first meeting with Mr. Spurgeon was in Glasgow, while he was student at the University. He determined to come to the College. Mr. Spurgeon accepted him, and in 1861 he joined the staff, remaining assistant tutor until Mr. Rogers vacated the chair. David Gracey was a gifted Irishman, with a ready wit, and strong sympathy. He was a child of the great Revival in 1859, and never lost his love for evangelistic work. Mr. Gracey so lived for the College that he was scarcely known to the wider public,

except by an occasional article in the *Contemporary Review*. Mr. Spurgeon established evening classes in the Tabernacle Lecture Hall for young men who desired to improve their education. In this he was helped by Mr. Bowers, and afterwards by the famous Mr. Fergusson. The popularity of the evening classes was very great. As many as three hundred men attended Mr. Fergusson's class in history, while the study of the English language attracted a great number of young fellows from the shop and the factory. The schoolmaster had not been abroad. The Evening Continuation Classes were unknown. The South London University was under the Tabernacle, and its Chancellor was "old Ferguy." Mr. Fergusson did the rougher work, preparing men for the College. To him was committed the rugged blocks of marble, out of which were to be hewn "the angels of the Churches." In addition to tutorial work, Mr. Fergusson founded a Church at Ealing. He began services in a large room at the back of a public house, and for many years preached the Gospel to an interesting and edified people. The failure of his sight necessitated his reluctant retirement. For nearly eight years this servant of the Lord waited in the shadows at the gates of dawn. He went home in December, 1900—poor, though having made many rich.

The work of the College during its history has been much greater than its founders hoped. More than a thousand students have been educated within its walls. About eight hundred men are still preaching and serving the Lord in some department of Christian work. Six hundred and fifty-five are accredited as pastors, missionaries and evangelists in the Baptist denomination.

Mr. Spurgeon's name will ever be associated with the orphanage at Stockwell. That institution is an imperishable monument of his love and sympathy. Long ago, Mr. Spurgeon was asked to see a Mrs. Hillyard, who wished to devote £20,000 to the founding of an orphanage. He had been thinking over

the matter, and longed to undertake the work. The unexpected manner in which the supplies were provided determined his action, and the orphanage came into existence. It was a beautiful sight to see the great preacher the centre of a merry group of children at play. The true saint loves the little people, and is ever young in heart. The orphanage doors are open to the children of the most needy of all denominations and of none. About two thousand have received the blessings of the institution. Mr. V. J. Charlesworth, the head master from the first, is a Greatheart, an ideal man for the position. He has fathered a great multitude, and from the time he resigned his position as assistant to Dr. Newman Hall, to become house-father to the orphanage, he has been engaged in a ministry full of anxiety to himself, but of untold blessing to the children.

The almshouses for old people tell of Mr. Spurgeon's care for the widow. The Colportage Association, with its great output of cheap literature, shows his appreciation of the Press, and faith in the possibilities of spreading the Gospel in the printed page. Mr. Spurgeon's work as an author is amazing. His two secretaries, Mr. Harrauld and Mr. Keys, were kept as busily engaged as clerks in a merchant's office. The publication of his sermons, which still continues, has been unparalleled in the history of Christian literature. In Great Britain the weekly sale was for many years twenty-five thousand copies, while special sermons have reached a circulation of as many as two hundred thousand copies. In the early days, when his sermons first made their appearance in volume form, twenty thousand copies of one volume were sold in America. His chief work is "The Treasury of David," an exposition of the Psalms in seven volumes. His books and sermons have been translated into many languages. They are read in China, in Japan, and on the banks of the Congo. No preacher, since the days of the Apostles, has had so many readers of his message.

In the later years of Mr. Spurgeon's life he became more subject to attacks of illness. Preaching was often a terrible strain. When he completed twenty-five years of his work in London, in 1879, he was feeble in health. The congregation determined to mark their appreciation of his services, and a sum of £6,238 was presented to him. The celebration was a wonderful demonstration of affection. In 1884, upon his fiftieth birthday, another presentation was made, and, as upon the previous occasion, a sum of money was given unconditionally to Mr. Spurgeon. This time the amount was £4,500, but, as before, he insisted upon giving the whole amount to various works in connection with the Tabernacle, selected by himself. Mr. Spurgeon's last years were doubtless clouded by controversy. He had been the ready helper of his brethren in the ministry. To the Baptist Union he had given willing assistance. Unhappily, the relationship became strained. He withdrew from the London Baptist Association, and from the Union, on the ground that the basis on which each was founded had become an unscriptural one. A series of articles had appeared in the "Sword and Trowel," lamenting the wide-spread declension from the orthodox faith. It was declared that Unitarianism was openly preached in Baptist pulpits. The controversy became fierce and bitter. Mr. Shindler, who had written the earlier articles, was defended by Mr. Spurgeon. Information came to him from many sources concerning the wild and rationalistic utterances made in many pulpits. Officials of the Baptist Union provided him with private complaints against the preaching of certain ministers. Mr. Spurgeon's protest was endorsed by many who did not feel justified in following his course of action in withdrawing from the denominational organisations, nor did they think that the proposal to guard entrance to the Baptist Union by an authoritative creed, which should be a test of orthodoxy, would be a remedy for the evil. Mr. Spurgeon disbanded the Pastors' College Association of ministers and formed a new association, adding to the title the

word "Evangelical." Some of the pastors withdrew and formed another conference, which lived for a while; but the great majority of Spurgeon's men followed their leader. It is a sad chapter in a noble life. The Baptist Union, through its council, tried to compromise with Mr. Spurgeon. They did not understand him. Dr. Booth, who was secretary, has been described as "a born amalgam." He tried hard to hold Mr. Spurgeon in the Union. Deputations were sent and resolutions were passed, but in vain. The London Association decided against the pastor of the Tabernacle. The secretary, Rev. F. A. Jones, was one of Spurgeon's men, and was called to decide between his old allegiance and his love for the college, or the greater liberty of the pulpit. The down-grade controversy was ended, as Mr. Spurgeon said, by his final severance from denominational organisations. The council of the Baptist Union passed a resolution justifying their action, and vindicated the men who were suspected of heresy in their claim for the right to be in the Baptist Union. They also added a sentence of complaint against Mr. Spurgeon. That sentence has become known as the "Vote of Censure," through which a number of ministers and Churches left the Baptist Union, and declined to return as long as that sentence, which Mr. Spurgeon regarded as an impeachment of his honour, remained upon the records of the council.

Mr. Spurgeon's last illness was watched by all England. He went to his beloved resting place at Mentone. The first telegram from Calais on the way out was reassuring. On New Year's Eve he was able to speak to a few friends in the hotel, and again on New Year's Day. He wrote to the Rev. A. G. Brown, who was celebrating his silver wedding at the East London Tabernacle: "You have long been dear to me, but in your standing shoulder to shoulder with me in protest against deadly error, we have become more than ever one." Mr. Spurgeon hoped to return to his work, but it was not to be. In the last hour of January, 1892, the tired spirit of the greatest

preacher of the English-speaking people was freed from pain, and entered into the presence of his Lord. On the following Sunday from thousands of pulpits reference was made to his life and death. Those who had been his opponents in theological controversy were among the first and most generous in their utterances of praise to God for Spurgeon's work. Mr. Spurgeon's coffin was brought to the Pastors' College, and afterwards to the Metropolitan Tabernacle for the funeral services. Thousands of persons passed through the Tabernacle to read the inscription which followed the name and date of birth and death on the coffin: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." At the funeral services thousands of persons assembled. It was estimated that over sixty thousand persons came. The collection at the door was for the Stockwell Orphanage. If the character of those who by their presence testified their regard for the dead may be judged by the coins given, it is easy to see that the £60 in copper and £90 in silver show the majority of mourners to have been from the ranks of the toilers. The procession to the grave at Norwood Cemetery was a wonderful sight. Immense crowds were in the streets, and a vast concourse of reverent spectators waited at the cemetery, where Mr. A. G. Brown, Dr. Pierson, and the present Archbishop of Canterbury, then Bishop of Rochester, conducted the service. Mr. Brown's words of farewell—or rather, good night—to the President were memorable indeed. He said: "Thou art in God's own light; our night, too, shall soon be past, and with it all our weeping. Then with thine, our songs shall greet the morning of a day that knows no cloud or close, for there is no night there. Hard worker in the field, thy toil is ended. Straight has been the furrow thou has ploughed: no looking back has marred thy course. Harvests have followed thy patient sowing, and heaven is already enriched with thine ingathered sheaves, and shall be still enriched through years yet lying in eternity. Champion of God, thy battle, long and nobly

fought, is over." Spurgeon's men, a great band, stood by the grave.

" We that had loved him so, followed him, honoured him,
Lived in his light and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
Made him our pattern to live and to die."

Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon, the lifelong helper of her husband in good works, inaugurated a beneficent ministry known as the "Book Fund," by which she sent to poor ministers of all denominations and village preachers helpful literature. The letters that came to her from almost all parts of the world, telling stories of suffering and struggle, touched the hearts of generous friends, whose gifts enabled her to send the best kind of help to men in the ministry. For many years Mrs. Spurgeon was an invalid, but to the last she nobly aided her husband in his great work. Mrs. Spurgeon's two sons, Thomas and Charles, have become well-known in the Baptist ministry, the former as pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Mr. Charles Spurgeon ministered for a number of years to a large congregation in Greenwich. All over the country he became known as an occasional preacher and lecturer. Recently he visited the churches in South Africa, and conducted evangelistic services in most of the centres of English population.

Associated in the pastorate of the Tabernacle with his brother was Mr. James Spurgeon. He had been minister of Churches at Southampton and Bayswater. Afterwards he built up a strong cause at Croydon, where his name is a household word, but his great work was done in connection with the Tabernacle and its institutions. It is worthy of note that in 1863, when he settled at Bayswater, Henry Ward Beecher gave an address at the recognition service. Toward the close of 1867, his brother's health showed symptoms of giving way, and "Mr. James" was called to the co-pastorate. His great qualifications for business and organising capacity made him an ideal man for his life-work. In connection with the

Orphanage and the College he rendered special service, and it is not too much to say that C. H. Spurgeon's work would have been considerably less but for the assistance of the man who was strong enough to stand in the shadow in order to help his brilliant brother. During the time of the down-grade controversy, it seemed as if the brothers were not quite agreed upon matters of policy, though they were one in principle. Mr. James Spurgeon became less in touch with the Pastors' College Conference, and more at one with the Baptist Union. He was elected to the Presidency of the Union in 1899. He had prepared his address upon "The Faith once for all delivered unto the saints." The manuscript was found after his death, and was revised and read to the Assembly by the Rev. J. Owen, of Swansea. It produced a deep impression. It had all the characteristics of Mr. James. It was evangelical, Catholic and expectant. The news of his sudden death on the 22nd of March, 1899, made a painful impression. He left his home at Croydon to attend a meeting of the directors of the Star Life Insurance Company. While in the train he felt ill, and decided to return home. He was assisted into the train to Brighton. When it came to the end of the journey, the guard discovered Mr. Spurgeon dead in the carriage. Great sympathy was expressed for his widow and little children, and at the meeting of the Baptist Union a special resolution of tender solicitude was passed. Mr. Spurgeon, in 1892, received the degrees of D.D. and LL.D. from Colegate University, U.S.A. Students who have passed through the College during the time Mr. James was Vice-Principal know the readiness he manifested in assisting any man in difficulty or in grief.

After C. H. Spurgeon's death, the question arose, "Who can fill his place?" The inquiry was in vain. Nature issues no second editions of genius, no man ever did fill another's niche, simply because no man is another. He must be himself or nothing. The prophet's mantle may fall upon Elisha, but he is Elisha still. Dr. Pierson was fulfilling a preaching engage-

ment at the Tabernacle at the time the Pastor was called to his reward. He was comparatively an unknown man in England. Born in New York in 1837, he had in the early years devoted himself to mission work in the slums of the great city, where the lowest of the low of all nationalities herded together rather as cattle than as human beings. After his college course he held Presbyterian pastorates in various cities, until he was called to Detroit. The church building was described as one of the most elaborate and elegant in America. The congregation was select, wealthy and influential. The submerged tenth were not represented, nor was the artisan conspicuously present. Caste prejudices are as strong among the white people as among the coloured races in American society. Dr. Pierson has told us how he longed to preach the Gospel to the common people, but they would not come across the threshold of the magnificent church. Upon an eventful night a prayer convention was held, and he expressed the opinion that the people were kept away by the ornate ecclesiastical building. The Doctor says, "We prayed about it. While we were praying, the church building was burning." When the prayer meeting was over, the room was partly filled with smoke, but it was supposed that a contrary wind was driving down the flues. Before the morning the beautiful building was a heap of ruins. The Grand Opera House was taken, and for sixteen months Dr. Pierson preached. When the new church was erected, a crowd of toilers gathered within its fellowship, and it was demonstrated that a rich, aristocratic congregation may be united with the masses, under the one ministry. Dr. Pierson's missionary zeal was proverbial. For many years he has edited the *Missionary Review of the World*. In the Tabernacle pulpit he was a great contrast to Mr. Spurgeon in his style and methods of sermonising, but they were one in doctrine and passionate zeal for the evangelisation of the masses. The congregations did not fall off. Mr. James did all he could to influence the Church members to call Dr.

Pierson, not to the pastorate, that being impossible, as then the Doctor, though a Baptist by conviction, had not been immersed. Dr. Spurgeon desired that he should be appointed preacher and Principal of the College. The London Baptist Association, through its President, the Rev. F. B. Meyer, expressed the indebtedness of the London Churches to Dr. Pierson for his difficult work at the Tabernacle. The attempt to make the temporary appointment permanent failed. The people remembered Thomas Spurgeon, who was ministering with success in the Auckland Tabernacle, which had been built by his efforts. They invited him for twelve months to his father's pulpit. He came, and at the closing service, a voice called out, "We'll have you back, sir." At this there was an outburst of cheering, for it was an open secret that he had won the hearts of the great majority of the congregation. Upon his return, the Old Tabernacle was as in the palmy days when C. H. Spurgeon was being welcomed after a holiday or illness. One of the papers said, "Thomas Spurgeon is a young man about thirty-six years of age, and, except for his florid complexion, greatly resembles his father as he was when a young man. Commencing with a prayer, the manner of which augured well for what was to follow, he implored that there might be no flagging zeal, no hearts that were not altogether taken up with the work of that house which had been so honoured in the past. Spurgeon junior has a fresh musical voice, and a clear, pleasant enunciation. He does not, it is true, possess his deceased father's remarkable gift, and his voice, albeit sympathetic and penetrating, has only a few of those sweet notes which invested the late pastor's speech with a unique charm; but in rugged eloquence Spurgeon's son is probably the nearest resemblance to him that the present generation are likely to witness." Twelve years have passed and the verdict of the evening paper has been endorsed. Mr. Thomas Spurgeon was welcomed for his father's sake. He is loved for his own sake. Few men have been called to engage in so

difficult a task, and to carry such great burdens. The duties of the Tabernacle pulpit were exacting enough, but the loss of Dr. Spurgeon from the work of organisation and control of the finances of the institutions, added to the strain in a way that only those familiar with the inner working of the Tabernacle could imagine. It is undoubtedly true that the crowds do not flock to the Tabernacle as in the old days. The institutions are not sustained as they used to be, but it is questionable whether any man could have done much more in Spurgeon's place than Spurgeon's son has been enabled to do.

The 29th of April, 1898, remains a red-letter day in the history of the Tabernacle Church and the Pastors' College Conference. There are some scenes which remain vivid as long as the memory endures. Such a scene was the burning of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. The place made sacred by so many memories and such mighty works became a charred heap with only the walls standing. The ending was at once sensational and tragic. The Conference was sitting; Thomas Spurgeon was in the chair, and the Rev. James Stevens, M.A., was giving an address upon "Fellowship with God." There was a noise at the end of the hall, and cries of "Chair." Mr. Stevens paused, while a few ministers nearest to the door made a sudden exodus down the stairs. The President asked for order, and Mr. Stevens would have resumed his address but for the continued noise at the entrance. One of the ministers ascended the platform and whispered to the chairman. Mr. Spurgeon, with apparent coolness, called upon Mr. Stevens to proceed, but by this time the men were restless, and demanded to know what it all meant. The President said, "I have just been informed that the Tabernacle is on fire. I understand it is not serious. Anyhow, we must have no panic here. We and the Tabernacle are in God's hands. The Conference and I shall have better news in a few minutes." Pastor Stevens concluded his address, and then it was announced that the top gallery of the Tabernacle was ablaze. Mr. Spurgeon said,

"The firemen are there. We should only be in the way. Shall we pray about it?" But the cries of "Fire" outside made it impossible for the meeting to continue. The chairman said: "The ladies will kindly retire first, then the brethren will leave the building leisurely to prevent panic." Outside, the streets were thronged by thousands of people, and the firemen were already hard at work. The sight was indescribable. Most of the ministers were in tears. The dear old building, so precious to them, seemed to be in the last stage of destruction. It was clear that all hope of saving it was out of question. Mr. Spurgeon and others looked amazed. What had been supposed to have been an unimportant accident was evidently a great calamity. Mr. Spurgeon's coolness was beyond praise. Had he lost mental balance, there would probably have been a panic in the crowded College. Mr. Dunn led a little band of old students in saving the treasures from the fire.

The larger part of the cost of the rebuilding was covered by insurance, and generous friends all over the country sent donations. Mr. Spurgeon conducted services in Exeter Hall until the new Tabernacle was ready. It was fitting that the building operations should be in the hands of Mr. William Higgs, whose father was responsible for the erection of the first structure. The seating capacity was considerably reduced to provide additional rooms for offices, but the main features remained the same. The congregations are still considerable, and the Tabernacle remains the largest Baptist Church in England. No praise is too great for the men who have stood by the pastor during the years which have been filled with struggle and strain.

The institutions founded by C. H. Spurgeon still continue; the College in its last report is described as receiving more applications for ministers than it can supply. Its men have gone all over the world to preach the Gospel. Its tutorial staff was never more efficient than at the present time. The academic distinction of the tutors is perhaps higher than that

of any Baptist College. It is impossible to do more than mention a few of the men who have gone forth to render distinguished service in the ministry. Mr. Archibald Brown stands foremost in the ranks; Mr. Cuff, whose ministry at Shoreditch Tabernacle has become familiar history, has served the Churches since 1865; London has possessed no more zealous worker in the East End than William Cuff. There are hundreds of men who, when they first heard his voice were among the outcast population, but who are now the living evidences of the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Mr. Cuff has been honoured by his brethren in being called to the presidential chair of the Baptist Union, and his utterances were the outcome of a full experience and a robust mind. In the Twentieth Century Fund movement, he rendered yeoman service, and won the praise of all sections of the denomination. Pastor W. Y. Fullerton, of Melbourne Hall, Leicester, was for a number of years evangelising with Mr. Manton Smith; thousands of people professed conversion at the services he conducted. The Rev. Charles Joseph, of St. Andrew Street, Cambridge, whose name is familiar to undergraduates, and whose work beyond his church is well-known, has recently devoted much time to the organisation of Baptist local preachers; he is the moving spirit behind the National Scheme, which may yet realise Baptist Noel's dream of five thousand local preachers carrying the Gospel to the villages, where settled pastorates are impossible; Mr. Joseph's work in Birmingham is still remembered by the intelligent artisans, and bears fruit beyond the denomination. Pastor Frank White, a gentle spirit whose ministry in the West End of London has for many years attracted thoughtful people, went from the College in 1862. The President of the Baptist Union, Mr. John Wilson, is a Spurgeon's man, and a fine example of the gospel of self-help. At the age of fourteen, he left his father's farm at Crathie; having passed through the College in 1877, he went to an empty chapel in Charles Street,

Woolwich ; the work prospered and grew so rapidly that one building after another was crowded, until the Tabernacle was built at a cost of £14,500 ; Mr. Wilson has for long been the most influential man in Woolwich ; he has served his neighbours as member of the London School Board for twelve years, being chairman of the Scripture Committee, and upon his retirement receiving the thanks of the teachers and of educationalists generally. During Mr. Wilson's presidency he has travelled thousands of miles in the service of the Churches, and has been recognised as one of the ablest men in the Baptist denomination. The historic Church at Broadmead, Bristol, which under the ministry of Mr. Gange was a power for good in every part of the city's life, is a greater influence than it has ever been in its previous history. Rev. D. J. Hiley, the pastor, left the College in 1886 ; he ministered in Wales and at Dalston Junction ; his call to Broadmead has been more than justified. Mr. Hiley's visits to the metropolis are eagerly looked for, and few men are so welcome in the Metropolitan Tabernacle pulpit as the gifted Welshman from Bristol. At Peckham, Pastor J. W. Ewing, M.A., maintains the reputation he gained at Wandsworth ; his preaching is at once cultured and attractive. The new minister of the famous sanctuary at Regent's Park is a Spurgeon's man, but every county could supply the names of those who, hailing from the Pastors' College, have done good work in the service of Jesus Christ. Mr. John Bradford, the secretary of the London Baptist Association, belongs to the brotherhood. Dr. McCaig and Professor Hackney, M.A., were formerly students of the institution in which they are now tutors. The clear increase in the membership of Churches presided over by Spurgeon's men is 2,433 for the year, and the total increase since the inauguration of the College is 117,778.

CHAPTER XIV

THE BAPTISTS AT THE MIDDLE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE religious census of 1851 is a great landmark in the history of the Churches. It was the first serious attempt in a State paper to describe Nonconformists as they really existed rather than to caricature them. For the first time there was given to the country a full picture of the state of its religion as exhibited by its religious institutions. The statistics given showed that the Particular Baptists had 1,374 chapels in England, and 373 in Wales; the New Connexion General Baptists counted 179 in England, and 3 in the Principality; the old General Baptists possessed 93 chapels, while the Seventh Day Baptists had two places of worship, and the Scotch brethren, who differed from the English denomination in their opposition to a paid ministry, had twelve meeting-places in our country.

The first result of the census was a violent attack by leading Churchmen upon those who were responsible for issuing the figures; Mr. Horace Mann was especially singled out for abuse. The critics insisted that the returns were inaccurate, and that the wicked Dissenters had made exaggerated estimates of the seating capacity of their chapels, and by some mysterious means had succeeded in packing their places of worship on the very Sunday the census was taken. Lord Palmerston, in the House of Commons, gave an assurance that the returns were substantially accurate, and that such inaccuracies as there were "could have no sensible effect upon the general results arrived at." Mr. Samuel Morley called a conference to consider

the possibility of evangelising the masses. The census showed a lamentable disregard for public worship. Baptists and others favoured the idea of holding popular services in theatres and public halls. To facilitate this, a Bill was introduced into the House of Commons for the repeal of the Conventicle Act of George III., which, though forgotten, still forbade, under heavy penalties, the meeting for worship of more than twenty persons except in registered buildings. The Bill passed the Commons, and Lord Shaftesbury took charge of the measure in the Lords. Here it was hotly opposed, however, by the bishops. "It would interfere," declared Wilberforce, "with the parochial divisions of the Church of England, upon which, after all, they must depend for evangelising the people." The Bill was sent to a Select Committee, and afterwards passed in a badly mutilated form. In 1857 services were held, at the suggestion of the good Earl, in Exeter Hall on Sunday evenings. Permission was obtained from the Bishop and the incumbent, so that well-known Evangelical clergymen could preach. They were very successful, and were organised for the next winter, but, by an oversight, the consent of the incumbent was not obtained. He took umbrage, and forbade the clergy coming into his parish to take part in services. An appeal was made to Dr. Brock and Dr. Landels. They consented to conduct the services, and, with others, carried them on, much to the chagrin of the incumbent. The attendance was as large as at the first, and Baptists discovered the attractiveness of a public hall for evangelistic meetings.

Bloomsbury Chapel, in the centre of London, was erected in 1849. Under the inspiring ministry of Dr. Brock, it became a home of varied efforts to reach the life of the metropolis. Dr. Brock was an unofficial bishop in the denomination, and for many years its leader in good works. His deep interest in progressive movements and in the problems affecting the social life of the people brought him into close touch with social reform. Bloomsbury was a Church with institutions long

before the institutional Church was dreamed of. It was the glory of Bloomsbury to possess and effectually work a slum mission before "slumming" became a fashionable craze. Dr. Brock heard the cry of outcast London, or at least that part of it which sweltered in Seven Dials, the plague area of the centre of the metropolis. To the district where vice was most rampant Bloomsbury sent its representative, Mr. G. W. McCree, a man of consecrated common-sense and great boldness in the service of Christ. He was identified with every good work, and was as popular in the "thieves' kitchen" of the penny lodging-house as upon the platform of a temperance meeting. Mr. McCree was the founder of the midnight mission movement to provide homes for destitute women who swell the ranks of that sisterhood of shame which is still society's danger and condemnation.

Regent's Park Chapel was opened in 1855. The building had been used for exhibiting a gigantic diorama. Sir Morton Peto, M.P., conceived the bold idea of converting the place into a chapel. He successfully carried out his plans, and when Dr. Landels went into the pulpit the building was so changed that it was more like a Nonconformist cathedral than a place of entertainment. Dr. Landels was born in 1823 at Eyemouth, a fishing village in Berwickshire. By birth and training he was a member of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland; by spiritual quickening and affinity he became a Methodist, and afterwards, by conviction, a Baptist. At the age of twenty-three he settled as pastor of a little Church in Cupar, Fife. He remained during four years. Some of the townsfolk resented his outspokenness, but the majority admired the courage that prompted him to advocate an unpopular cause. He went to Wycliffe Chapel, Birmingham, in 1850, and at once became a power in the midland town. His reputation travelled to London, and he was in request for special services specially for lectures. Dr. Landels and the Rev. Morley Punshon divided the honour of attracting the greatest crowd to

Exeter Hall for a popular lecture. Dr. Landels had a wonderful memory. He could deliver a whole series of orations without notes and without the slightest variation from his manuscript. He composed his public utterances with great attention to oratorical effect. The sentences were decorative and delivered in a torrent of unfaltering and passionate speech. Audiences were held breathless until the peroration was finished. While Dr. Landels delivered his lectures on "The Lessons of the Streets," "Business," and "The Lives of Great Men," nobody supposed that he was repeating sentences which had been written and rewritten many times before they crystallised in the form in which they were spoken. Crowds flocked to the services at Regent's Park to see the building which had become a place of worship through the princely liberality of Sir Morton Peto. When the curiosity died down there still remained a great congregation, with a large proportion of young men and many persons of social distinction. For twenty-eight years Dr. Landels ministered in London, until he felt that he had earned the right to change his sphere of ministry. In 1883 he went to Dublin Street Chapel, Edinburgh, and in a city of preachers found his home. Ten years later he celebrated the jubilee of his ministerial life, and at a great meeting was presented with a thousand guineas and other indications of the widespread respect and admiration in which he was held by all denominations. He passed away a year before the close of the century. He was a keen controversialist, and wielded a sharp sword, but his thrusts were ever on behalf of what he regarded as true and right, and his wounds left no suspicion of ungenerous warfare.

Lord Justice Lush was closely associated with Dr. Landels at Regent's Park. The Church gave liberally to missionary and benevolent institutions. In 1868, when its pastor was President of the London Baptist Association, and in that capacity became responsible for erecting the new chapel at the Downs, Clapton, the congregation rendered generous assistance.

Eight years after Dr. Landels was President of the Baptist Union, and created general comment by his utterance from the chair in favour of denominational loyalty. Regent's Park was a Union Church, into the fellowship of which baptised and unbaptised persons were received alike upon profession of their faith in Jesus. Many Baptists had regarded the Doctor as being lax in his teaching of distinctive Baptist principles. His utterance from the chair of the Union was denounced by those outside the Baptist denomination as bigoted and sectarian, while some of his friends could not understand how such trenchant defence of Baptist institutions could exist with so broad a practice as that of open Church membership. The great event of Dr. Landels' presidency was not his address, but the launching of the annuity fund for aged Baptist ministers.

The Indian mutiny, beside being one of the outstanding events in English history, has a special interest for Baptists from the connection of General Sir Henry Havelock with our denomination. The terrible news came that at station after station, from the Punjaub down to Calcutta, the country was in a flame. English officers and civilians, women and little children, were murdered. The awful story of Cawnpore was written in blood. All the native Christians within the district were massacred. The two hundred and forty men capable of bearing arms undertook the defence of eight hundred and seventy women and children. For twenty-two days Sir H. Wheeler and his little band fought with unsurpassed heroism, but it was hopeless. The numbers, reduced by death and overstrain, brought the fighting band down to a ridiculous figure in face of the armed multitudes surrounding their quarters. The officers accepted the promise of a safe passage for all their company down the Ganges on the condition that they retired without taking the ammunition and treasure stored in their quarters. The women and children were conducted to the boats; then the men entered, and they pushed off, but a murderous fire was opened upon them, and when Havelock

reached the fort it was too late. The brave company had been annihilated.

The relief of Lucknow broke the neck of the Indian mutiny, and saved the empire across the seas to the British crown. Havelock led the attack with the courage and rare genius he had shown in the Afghan campaign. His men knew him, they had been under his command when famine stared them in the face and disease assailed them at every step, and their courage had enabled him to report, "Though the position is most critical, there is not, I trust, an ounce of despondency amongst us." Havelock had joined his men in prayer. He has been compared to Cromwell in his love of reading the Psalms and exhorting the soldiers before a battle. It was a critical task. Upon them the lives of a great number rested. They charged the gates with irresistible courage. The men who led the way were mown down by the pitiless fire from behind the city wall; they charged again, and entered with a great shout of victory. The rest is well known.

It is difficult to say whether Havelock commands our admiration more as an hero or as a Christian. Worn in body, pure in heart, with an energy no difficulties could daunt and a resolution which no disasters could shake, he finally sealed his devotion to his country by his blood. There is a passage in Count Montalembert's estimate of Havelock which may be recalled not only for its accuracy, but for the tribute it contains to the religion which was the chief force in Havelock's character: "The name of Havelock recalls and sums up all the virtues which the English have exercised in this gigantic strife. Havelock, a personage of an antique grandeur, resembling in their most beautiful and irreproachable aspects the great Puritans of the seventeenth century, and who had arrived at the portals of old age before he shone out to view, and was thrown suddenly into a struggle with a great peril before him and insignificant means wherewith to overcome it, surmounted everything by his religious courage, and attained by a single stroke to glory and that immense

popularity which resounds everywhere where the English language is spoken. Then he died before he had enjoyed it, occupied, especially in his last moments, as he had been all his life, with the interests of his soul and the propagation of Christianity in India."

Havelock's fidelity to conscience kept him from the position to which his rare genius and ability entitled him. He saw men promoted over his head who were in long clothes when he was serving in India. He was a lieutenant up to the age of forty-three. After his magnificent services during the Afghan war, when the generals whom he had counselled were loaded with prizes, he returned to his regiment with his "wife and family on four hundred rupees a month, to take the oversight of the shirts and stockings of No. 4 Company of Her Majesty's 13th Light Infantry." His neglect was the disgrace of the War Office, but it revealed the greatness of the man. He did his duty steadily, and when his assistance was eagerly sought by men in the highest positions he gave his counsel as readily as if he had been planning the campaign for himself.

The town of Northampton has for generations been a centre of progressive thought. The shoemakers are proverbially Radicals, and to the men at the bench and the captains of industry who have organised their labour England owes much. In 1843 the Church at College Street, Northampton, called the Rev. J. T. Brown. He had been engaged as school-master and pastor of a little community at Oakham. With characteristic courage, he went to Northampton, and at once commanded the attention of the town. The Church grew in membership and influence, while he became widely known and honoured for the services he rendered not only to his own Church, but to movements for the elevation of the people. College Street became the centre of light and leading in the county. For fifty years Mr. Brown proclaimed the Gospel in Northampton. Throughout the county he travelled continually, aiding village Churches. He was a man greatly beloved. His

tender and ready sympathy and genial personality made him welcome in any community, while his manliness and strength of character fitted him to lead the sharp-witted operatives of the town. Mr. Bradlaugh's connection with Northampton has given the impression that secularism was rampant in the district. That was never really so. Mr. Bradlaugh's influence was political rather than religious. The workmen honoured him for his loyalty to his convictions and his thorough-going Radicalism. His attack was upon the Churches and their representation of Christianity rather than upon the Christian faith. Mr. Bradlaugh's influence undoubtedly made the work of the Churches more difficult, but it also stimulated them to a greater activity.

Connected with Northampton there will ever be the name of "Marianne Farningham." For over thirty years Miss Hearn, whose pen-name is taken from the little village in which her early days were spent, was the teacher of a Bible-class at College Street. It was attended by women and girls of all classes, who came in great numbers, and loved to come. One of the best social influences of the town was Miss Hearn's Bible-class. Her literary work has been chiefly in connection with the *Christian World*, on whose staff she has been from its first publication. She has also edited the *Sunday-school Times*, a lesson help conducted upon popular lines since its commencement. Marianne Farningham's is a name beloved not only in Baptist households, but wherever the English language carries the songs and stories of the *Christian World*. Her hymns are sung in other lands, especially the one with the refrain, "Will anyone there at the beautiful gate be waiting and watching for me?" Mr. Sankey made that sacred song very popular.

Dr. Culross had a place all his own in the Baptist ranks. He belonged to the best school of mystics. Whatever he liked he loved. He had the poet's eye and the meditative mood of the idealist. In 1849 he went from college to take charge of

the little Church at Stirling, and for twenty years did his work with fidelity and patience. His intellectual integrity forbade his uttering anything in the pulpit he had not thought out for himself. The persuasiveness of his character was very striking. The Baptist Association of Scotland wisely placed under his care students for the ministry. When the new chapel at Highbury Hill, London, was erected, he became its pastor, and for seven years wrought among a devoted people. Then the Church in Glasgow invited him, and he returned to the north until 1883, when he became president of the Bristol college in succession to Dr. Gotch. Dr. Culross was especially happy in training pastors. He might have been described as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." The sweetness of his disposition and the strength of his mind made him a unique personality. His influence may be traced in the ministry of men who now hold prominent positions among the Baptists.

Baptist Churches were considerably exercised over the Temperance movement. The seven men of Preston in taking the teetotal pledge began a crusade greater than they knew. Here and there among the Baptists were those who realised that the drink question was the root question of seven-tenths of the problems of social reform. They began to agitate inside the Church for the establishment of teetotal societies. Isaac Doxsey, a sturdy Radical reformer, was a well-known figure in his time. He was a preacher, but he was most at home on the Temperance platform, or when engaged in the crusade against compulsory Church rates. With Father Mathew he went on some of his most startlingly successful Temperance missions. In connection with his Church at Thame, in Oxfordshire, he started a Temperance society in 1846, and attended its anniversary, except on three occasions, for fifty-three years. At first he belonged to the Temperance party. He had taken a pledge to abstain from all ardent spirits, but not from malt liquors. He says of himself, "I soon found in arguing that my position was illogical, and that the objection against spirits

applied equally to all fermented liquors. Henceforth I became a thorough teetotaler. I have abstained from physic for over fifty years, and from alcohol and tobacco for sixty-three years." He became secretary of the National Temperance Society, and travelled the country urging its claims. Mr. Doxsey was subsequently editor of the *National Temperance Chronicle*, which gave place to the *Temperance Record*. He was a fluent speaker and very popular. It was said, "There are several kinds of doxy : there's orthodoxy, which means my doxy ; there's heterodoxy, that's another man's doxy ; lastly, there's Isaac Doxsey, he is everybody's Doxsey." He was closely associated with the Rev. G. M. Murphy in the work at the Lambeth Baths. Mr. Murphy was a Congregationalist known as "the Bishop of the New Cut." He held nightly meetings for working people, and great numbers signed the pledge under the advocacy of Mr. Murphy and Isaac Doxsey.

In the Temperance movement Dr. Dawson Burns played a prominent part. A Londoner by birth, he settled as pastor of the General Baptist Chapel, Church Street, Marylebone. He had previously worked in Manchester, where he acquired considerable acquaintance at first hand with the results of the drink traffic. His interest in Temperance work led him to devote the greater part of his time to the advocacy of total abstinence. This was possible, as he was assistant to his father, the famous Jabez Burns, D.D., whose ministry at Church Street had extended over a number of years. When Temperance work was organised, Dr. Dawson Burns became the agent of the London society, and afterwards secretary of the United Kingdom Alliance. With Sir Wilfrid Lawson he travelled the country, and preached wherever he could get access to a pulpit upon his one theme of total abstinence.

Reference has already been made to the generosity of Sir Morton Peto, but his services to the Baptists were not restricted to his princely liberality. He was successively member of Parliament for Norwich, Finsbury, and Bristol.

To his initiative we owe the Act facilitating the appointment of Dissenting trustees. He introduced the Nonconformist Burial Bill of 1861. The Rev. G. Gould, of Norwich, had published a letter on "The Refusal of Christian Burial to the Unbaptised." It revealed a disgraceful state of things in Norfolk. Sir Morton Peto took the question up, and a Bill was introduced to the House. Its special features were provision for the burial, without the use of the burial service in the Prayer-book, of all unbaptised persons and all Nonconformists who were by the canons declared to be excommunicated *ipso facto*. It legalised the appointment of any person not being a clergyman to conduct a burial service. It also secured payment of all legal fees and dues. In introducing the measure, Sir Morton Peto called attention to the case of the Rev. Mr. Long, of Newton Flotman, in Norfolk, who for several years had been in the habit of carting soil from the north side of his churchyard for manuring his private glebe. In the previous autumn he took away about fifty cartloads. Inquiries were made why ground was only removed from that portion of the churchyard. Mr. Long replied that that was the part used for the burial of Nonconformists and the unbaptised. A gentleman went from Norwich to make inquiries, and brought back a skull which was picked up on the ground. It was exhibited in the offices of the Mayor of Norwich, and considerable excitement was caused. The Bill was passed into law, and the thanks of Nonconformists were accorded to Sir Morton Peto. In the calamity of 1866, on the day of financial panic known in the City as "Black Friday," the great contractors Peto and Betts were forced into bankruptcy. Their liabilities were estimated at four millions sterling. After this catastrophe Sir Morton practically retired from public life, though the failure of his firm was caused by circumstances which were admittedly beyond any possibility of his control. He was knighted in recognition of his enterprise in constructing

a railway from Balaclava to Sebastopol during the Crimean war.

In 1865 the Baptist Union held its first annual meeting at Birmingham. The reports were encouraging. The increase in Church membership was largely accounted for by the London Churches, notably that presided over by C. H. Spurgeon. One of the prominent figures among the ministers was the Rev. John Aldis, who is happily still with us, enjoying the distinction of being the oldest Baptist minister. Mr. Aldis rendered considerable assistance to the movement for freeing the teaching profession from ecclesiastical tests. The University Tests Act opened the ancient seats of learning to Free Churchmen in 1871. During the thirty years between 1860 and 1889 the position of Senior Wrangler at Cambridge was won nineteen times by Nonconformists. Conspicuous in the list of prizemen stand the names of three of the sons of Mr. Aldis. Mr. Steadman Aldis was Senior Wrangler in 1861. His brother was sixth Wrangler, with classical honours, in 1863, and another brother second Wrangler, with classical honours, in 1866. The name of Aldis has an honourable position in the scholastic world. Mr. Steadman Aldis spent some years in the colonies organising university education before settling at Oxford, where he finds time to minister to a village congregation as honorary pastor.

The baptismal controversy in the State Church drove some eminent men into the Roman communion. It gave some also to the Baptists, the most conspicuous being the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel. He was the son of Sir G. Noel Edwards, Bart. His mother was a daughter of Baron Barham. His brother was the Earl of Gainsborough. After graduating at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1826, he was ordained priest of the Church of England. He began his ministry at St. John's Chapel, Bedford Row, and soon won distinction as a cultured and evangelical preacher. He was appointed chaplain to the Queen. In 1848 he withdrew from the State Church, having serious scruples

concerning the office of baptism. He tried hard to reason against the growing conviction in his mind that baptismal regeneration was distinctly and unquestionably the teaching of the Prayer-book. He was immersed, and became minister of John Street Chapel, Bedford Row. His influence was very widespread, and he soon became as popular as a Nonconformist as he had been as a Churchman. He published the reasons for his secession in two works, one on the union of Church and State, in which he showed that the only solution of the difficulties of sectarianism was to be found in the Church keeping to her own sphere of religion and leaving the State to its sphere. The second work was an essay on Christian baptism, setting forth and defending the Baptist position. Mr. Noel was active in advancing the interests of religious and benevolent organisations. The Baptist Union called him to the presidency in 1855, and again in 1867. In addition to numerous pamphlets, Mr. Noel published sermons preached at the Chapels Royal of St. James and Whitehall, "The Case of the Free Church of Scotland," three volumes on baptism, and a volume on "Freedom and Slavery in the United States of America." He also issued a little collection of thirty-nine original hymns, some of which are favourites with Baptist congregations.

At this period another movement for the broadening of the Churches had its rise. The P.S.A. really began in the popular Sunday afternoon lecture inaugurated by the Rev. Hugh Stowell Brown in Liverpool and the Rev. Arthur Mursell in Birmingham. In 1854 Mr. Caine took the Concert Hall, Liverpool, for Saturday evening entertainments for the people. These were very successful, and proved to be a counter-attraction to the public-house. Mr. Caine then determined to use the building on Sunday with a view to attracting those who seldom went to church or chapel. He argued that it would be better for them to receive moral instruction than to be sleeping in their homes or lounging at public-house doors. A few friends impressed with the idea determined to make the

attempt. It was carried on with varying success until Mr. Brown was prevailed upon to undertake to deliver the address. At the first meeting there was an attendance of about two hundred persons. Within a few months the attendance had reached fifteen hundred, until the limit of the audience was the seating capacity of the building. Mr. Brown said upon an anniversary occasion, "I have always had at heart the welfare of the working men, and I have felt that in addressing them it is necessary to be as free as possible from all conventional phraseology current among sects and Churches. I take you to witness that I have never used my position here for the purpose of proselytising any man, for the purpose of making him a Baptist or a Dissenter. I have tried to win you over to Christ, to induce you to lead sober, righteous, and godly lives." Mr. Brown's addresses were published in London, and had a very large circulation. They were models of popular talks to miscellaneous audiences. Though not directly religious, they were conceived in the true religious spirit, and were oftentimes blessed to the conversion of those who would not have listened to a sermon.

Upon the lecture platform, popularising education and literature, were three men whose names are honoured among Baptists. The first was Mr. Charles Vince, whose ministry in Birmingham still influences the city. Mr. Vince had the gift of oratory, and did not spare himself in the wider ministry throughout the country. Wherever he went he was welcomed by enthusiastic listeners. Few men had the gift of exposition and the power to popularise abstruse thought on difficult subjects like Mr. Vince. His orations upon Nonconformist history and principles did much to awaken the thoughtless and inspire the indifferent with a love of Free Church teaching and ideals.

George Dawson, whose ministry in Birmingham had frightened some timid souls, found scope for his genius upon the lecture platform. He was described as the English

Emerson, and there was some justification for that high praise. The newspaper reports of his lectures show a wonderful range of subjects. From the foreign policy of Oliver Cromwell to the home life of Charles Lamb he travelled with a fulness of knowledge and a beauty of expression which charmed the crowds of young men and women who listened to his eloquence. Mr. Dawson's sermons, published in two volumes, and his book of "Prayers," are treasured in many households.

Joseph Barker, though he lectured upon totally different subjects, was well known to audiences all over the country. He had been a secularist of the Bradlaugh type. After his conversion he became an expositor of the faith, holding many discussions with his old colleagues and being successful in leading not a few out of the darkness of unbelief into the light of the Gospel. He had not the knowledge of Mr. Thomas Cooper, who also rendered effective service as a lecturer upon Christian evidences, but Mr. Barker possessed popular gifts and a passion for the truth which literally blazed in his utterances and carried conviction to many hearts.

When Mr. Gladstone proposed to disestablish the Church of Ireland, which had never been in any sense national, there was a great outcry. The clergy declared that they would never submit. All kinds of terrible consequences were predicted, from the starvation of the clergy to the rebellion of the Protestant districts. Baptists saw in the measure an instalment of that religious equality for which they have always contended. They worked hard for the cause, and had the pleasure of seeing the measure passed. The results have falsified the predictions of the prophets of despair, whose chief characteristic was distrust of the people. The Irish Baptist Mission, though organised in England, had taken firm root, not only in Protestant, but in Catholic, parts of the country. Its progress was greatly accelerated by the work of Dr. Alexander Carson, whose masterly statement of Baptist

teaching still remains the classic for Baptist students. The evangelists found in their work among the Irish people that they were opposed as strongly by the parson as by the priest. They urged their friends at home to help the cause of religious liberty represented for the moment by Mr. Gladstone and his Government.

The agitation for the repeal of compulsory Church rates was continued by the Baptists. It was fought in parish vestries, in the law-courts, in prisons, and in Parliament. Seizures of goods for non-payment of the rates were frequent occurrences. Sturdy Baptists preferred to lose their furniture or their spoons, under warrants of distraint, rather than admit the right of the State to give preferential treatment to one form of religious belief. Of the law cases growing out of the Church rate the most famous was that known as the Braintree case. It lasted eighteen years, and in it there were no less than eighteen decisions. The last of the series was a crowning victory to the Passive Resisters. It decided that no Church rate was good in law unless made by a majority of votes. It had been contended that, the vestry being bound to make a rate, the votes against making it were void. The agitation was continued all over the country. Parliamentary elections were fought upon the question, until at last everybody was tired of it. Lord Grosvenor proposed what he called "the only possible compromise." It was that Church rates should continue to be levied, but that they should be voluntary instead of compulsory. Mr. Gladstone adopted it, and Non-conformists felt indifferent about a rate that could not be enforced. Until the fight was won men like Sir John Barran, of Leeds, were found devoting their evenings to "stump oratory," with so much success that at the next General Election there was a substantial majority for the measure. The agitation ended in an unexpected fashion. The opponents yielded the position with the best grace they could. Lord John Russell proved to be a true prophet when, in the

heat of the agitation, he declared, "I know the Dissenters. They carried the Reform Bill, they carried the abolition of slavery, they carried Free Trade, and they will carry the abolition of Church rates."

At this time there came into prominence among the Baptists Mr. J. Sheridan Knowles, the accomplished playwright, who while a lad of fourteen produced "The Welsh Harper," a ballad which attracted the attention of Mr. Hazlitt. Mr. Sheridan Knowles had the good fortune to be introduced to a circle of distinguished authors, including Charles Lamb and Coleridge. He was a singularly unassuming character, and a great favourite. Hazlitt says, "He was unspoiled by success and unconscious of the wreath he had earned." Many of his plays became popular. He was led into the light of faith at Torquay through the preaching of the Rev. Alfred Pope. Mr. Knowles having confessed his Lord in baptism, set himself the task of acquiring that intimate knowledge of the Scriptures which afterwards astonished so many. He could with perfect accuracy and without effort recite most of the chapters in the Gospels, either in English or in Greek. He began to conduct services. The distinction he had gained upon the stage drew many to hear his message. The way in which he read the Scriptures gave new meaning to old words, and many converts were brought into the Church by his preaching.

Joseph Angus has left the ranks so recently that it is difficult to conceive that he was born in 1816. His early days were spent in the village of Bolam, Northumberland, amid Nonconformist surroundings. He used to say that his principles were in a sense hereditary. His fidelity was soon tested. At the age of seventeen his schoolmaster, Dr. Mortimer, afterwards Headmaster of the City of London School, offered to procure for him a scholarship at the University of Cambridge. The Thirty-nine Articles, which the student would have been required to sign, were an insuperable objection. Tempting as the offer was, Joseph Angus refused it. He went to

Edinburgh for a year, and in 1835 entered the Baptist College at Stepney. Dr. Ward's trust enabled him to resume his university course. He returned to Edinburgh, where he graduated with distinction, and won several prizes in 1837. The Baptist Church at Oxford sent him a pressing invitation, which, to the regret of many of his friends, he declined. Early in the following year he became pastor of the Church in New Park Street, which was afterwards to be the scene of C. H. Spurgeon's early ministry. Two years later he was called to become the colleague of the venerable Mr. Dyer, secretary of the Missionary Society. In 1841 Mr. Angus became sole secretary. He organised the jubilee celebrations, and the fund which amounted to the splendid total of £32,000. By means of this money the Mission House in Moorgate Street was built, the African Mission established, the Calabar College in Jamaica founded, and the Society's debts extinguished. In 1849 Dr. Angus was urged to become President of Stepney College. The fitness of the choice was acknowledged by all, and the new President entered upon his work with the good wishes of a large circle of friends, who knew his scholarship, and predicted a brilliant career for him in the new position. Their faith was justified. During forty-four years Dr. Angus trained students for the ministry with care and success. Within seven years the college removed from its out-of-the-way position in the East End of London to its present beautiful home in Regent's Park. The migration showed the President's sagacity and good sense. By his efforts a professorial fund amounting to £30,000 was raised and invested, while scholarships were acquired for the benefit of missionary and other students. Three Havelock scholarships were founded in remembrance of the great General and devoted to the education of missionaries' sons. Not the least interesting of these investments is that of a sum raised by friends as a testimonial to Dr. Angus, and generously devoted by him to the foundation of a lectureship, called by his name. Dr. Angus as an author published a prize essay

on the voluntary principle in reply to the lectures on Church establishment given by his friend and tutor, Dr. Chalmers. He compiled "The Bible in Many Tongues." The handbooks written for the Religious Tract Society on the English language and literature and the Bible are well known. They are still used in some colleges as text-books. In 1854 the *Athenæum* called attention to the list of inaccuracies in the Authorised Version, as given by Dr. Angus, and suggested that the Society should publish an edition of the Bible, with these corrections printed as footnotes. The suggestion was not acted upon, but the revisers of 1881 made good use of it. In the work of New Testament revision Dr. Angus took an important part.

Outside the Baptist denomination Dr. Angus rendered most effective service in the cause of education. He was an original member of the London School Board. The memorable struggle in the House of Commons to make education national resulted in Mr. Forster's Act of 1870, by which school boards were created to supply the deficiencies so apparent in the voluntary system. The debate showed that the Nonconformists in the House of Commons were not agreed upon the place of religious instruction in the schools. Mr. Alfred Illingworth, Mr. Miall, and Mr. Henry Richard condemned the favour shown to denominationalists. The Birmingham school of politicians, notably Mr. Dixon, Dr. Dale, and Mr. Chamberlain, were for secular education. For a time it seemed as if Nonconformity would follow their lead, but other counsels prevailed, and the compromise was accepted which has proved a source of controversy ever since. Mr. Gladstone agreed to the adoption of a time table allowing the freedom of local bodies in respect of religious teaching, and the exclusion from all elementary schools, entirely supported by the rates, of catechisms or formularies "distinctive of any particular denomination." Denominational schools were cut off from the rates, but were allowed an increased annual parliamentary grant to the extent

of 50 per cent. It was further provided that building grants for voluntary schools should, after an interval, be stopped, and that the election of school boards by the ratepayers should be by ballot. Baptists supported Mr. Richard in the contention that "the religious instruction should be supplied by voluntary effort, and not out of the public funds." The task of the London School Board was extremely difficult, and the London compromise was agreed upon. It was due to Dr. Angus and Mr. W. H. Smith, M.P., and at the time it was fondly believed that in the reading of the Scriptures, without note or comment, a common basis had been found on which all parties could unite, leaving denominational teaching to be supplied by the different Churches upon their own premises, and at their own expense. This arrangement has been largely followed throughout the country, and for years worked admirably. Upon the London School Board Dr. Angus had great influence. He was the leader of a little band of Baptists, who, during the unhappy controversy at the close of the century, numbered four ministers and a layman, who could be depended upon to stand unflinchingly for the liberty of the teacher and the rights of the parent as against the intrusion of the priest and the inquisition of the parson concerning the religious beliefs of the teachers. Dr. Angus devoted the closing years of his life to educational work. He attended the meetings of the old School Board up to the last. Sometimes he might be seen, with his hand to his ear, eagerly noting the progress of a debate, and preparing to take his share in the conflict. The long eventide spent amid much weakness was cheered by the memory of useful service and the presence of the members of his family, who were continuing their father's good works. August 28th, 1902, saw the home-going of the veteran, who for nearly a century had been familiar with the strife of tongues.

Dr. Davies and Dr. Gotch were associated with Dr. Angus in the revision of the Scriptures. Their knowledge of Hebrew secured for their views respectful attention from the

distinguished scholars with whom they co-operated. Dr. Gotch, during his presidency of the Baptist College, Bristol, was a great force with young men. His unfailing conviction of the truth of Scripture and his loyalty to its commands made him a leader worthy of being followed.

The Rev. H. H. Dobney and Dr. Samuel Cox were "pathfinders" in theology. Dr. Cox, during his ministry at Nottingham, began to preach that larger hope which has found permanent expression in Tennyson's creed. Mr. Dobney did his life-work at Maidstone. There he succeeded in building up, if not a strong Church, an influential congregation. The Dobney Institute for Young Men has become an educational agency of considerable importance. Mr. Dobney wrote much for the religious press. He published "Questions for the Free Churches," in which he showed how far in advance of his time he was. His letters to the Archbishop upon future punishment created quite a sensation, and became an effectual barrier to Mr. Dobney's admission to the great majority of Baptist pulpits. The Church at Maidstone drifted from the Baptist position to Congregationalism. Its members felt that Congregationalists and Baptists were so close akin that it was a pity for them to remain apart.

"Father Sturge," as he was lovingly called by the ministers, devoted a long life to the cause of religious and civil freedom. He came of a stock well known from the days of George Fox as princely givers and hard workers in religious and social movements. George Sturge, his uncle, gave £500,000 to charities. "Father Sturge" was born in London in 1816. After an apprenticeship to village preaching he became pastor of a little Church at Modbury. From there he went to Madras, but the climate of India did not permit him to stay long. Upon his return to England he settled at Dartford, and became the "Bishop of West Kent." He gathered a Church to which he ministered for twenty-five years. Like many Baptist pastors, Mr. Sturge served as a guardian of the poor and as chairman of the local

School Board. He insisted that he took his share of social service, not as a Baptist minister, but as a Christian citizen. It has yet to be recognised that Nonconformists all over the country have rendered yeoman service to local institutions, not to further their denominational interests, but to fulfil their obligations of citizenship.

CHAPTER XV

THE BAPTIST MINISTRY AT THE DAWN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

ONE of the glories of the Baptist ministry has been its variety. Isaiah, the courtier-prophet, and Amos, the herdsman, are represented in the Baptist ranks. There are preachers of sweet and cultured reasonableness and sons of thunder in the same ministry. The Baptist pulpit at the close of the nineteenth century was rich in gifted men. It included John Clifford, F. B. Meyer, J. G. Greenhough, Dr. Glover, Mr. Tipple, William Cuff, Charles Williams, A. G. Brown, John Thomas, and the prince of expositors, Alexander Maclaren. Among the younger men who are already known beyond their Churches there are D. J. Hiley, of Bristol, Mr. Charles Brown, of Ferme Park, Mr. Roberts, the gifted successor of Dr. Maclaren, Mr. Phillips, who is to lead the new movement at Bloomsbury, Mr. Joseph, of Cambridge, Dr. Aked, of Liverpool, and quite a number of scholars and preachers whose best work is yet to be done.

More than sixty years ago a poor lacemaker in the village of Beeston, near Nottingham, was compelled to supplement his wages by sending his little son into the factory to become a "jacker-off." He was a good man, of the Puritan type, whose circumstances compelled him to endure hardness. At four in the morning he would take his little laddie out of the cosy bed and place his feet on the cold floor away from the bit of carpet, so that he might wake the boy up and prevent his return to rest. The lad found pleasure in books. Almost his only recreation was the acquisition of odd bits of knowledge. Very early he began to live the strenuous life. He had fellowship with

poverty, and knew the struggles of the toilers. In after-years he saw the vision beautiful, and in fear and trembling obeyed the call. He entered the Midland College in 1858, and in due course was called to the ministry in a dingy chapel in the west of London. The crowds passed the door, but in the little Zion only a shadow of a congregation welcomed the young man from the country. Nothing daunted, he worked with increasing success to induce the people to listen to his message. While his neighbours slept the young preacher was toiling far into the night preparing for university examinations. In the eight years that followed his settlement at Praed Street he gained at the London University the B.A. degree, the B.Sc. with honours in Logic, Moral Philosophy, Geology, and Palæontology; he took his M.A., being placed first in his year, and the LL.B. with honours in the Principles of Legislation. London learned to know his worth, and now regards him as the Luther of social reform. He is acknowledged to be the great exponent of the civic gospel and the foremost advocate of equality of opportunity for the poor man's child. This, in bare outline, is the story of the life of Dr. Clifford. His history is familiar to Baptists. It is a record of struggle and achievement difficult to parallel in modern times. There is no finer living example of the gospel of the simple and strenuous life. Dr. Robertson Nicoll says, "Dr. Clifford's stupendous energy has no parallel in our time, save in the life of Mr. Gladstone; and strenuous though that life was, it was relieved by intervals of rest which have never come to the Baptist minister." The history of Praed Street Chapel from the day in 1858 when John Clifford entered its pulpit has been one of continuous and manifold service. In 1876 the memorial stone of Westbourne Park Chapel was laid by Sir Henry Havelock, and in the next year the building was opened, having cost £15,000. Dr. Clifford with characteristic self-denial, declined to accept any increase of stipend until the church was paid for. One of the things the Doctor does not understand is the love of money. Long

ago an invitation was sent to him which promised a position of great influence. He was then comparatively unknown, and some thought he would accept the call. A meeting of Church officers was arranged to consider the crisis. One of them said to another, "You of course will be there. It's very serious. They have offered him twice his present salary." "Then," replied the other deacon, with true insight into the character of the man, "I shall not trouble to come. It's all right. If they have offered Clifford any earthly advantage, he will certainly refuse to go."

Twice Dr. Clifford has been President of the Baptist Union. His presidential addresses show the trend of his thought upon the application of Christianity to civic institutions and individual life. At critical periods he has stood as the helmsman of the denominational organisation, and has won the respect of men who have been constrained to stand in opposition to his views. He has occupied the chair of the National Free Church Council, and is President of the Liberation Society. A list of the offices he holds would occupy all the space we can devote to this sketch. There is no man in the ministry who unites such a range of knowledge with such enthusiasm for social service. He has never hesitated to risk and even to lose for a time the public favour in order to proclaim the unpopular truth. During the South African war he was frankly opposed to the popular sentiment, and denounced the campaign as unjust, though his words for peace were received in sullen silence or with signs of disapprobation.

By common consent, Dr. Clifford is the leader of Nonconformity upon social questions. 'F. C. G.' has drawn him in the character of John Knox, but Dr. Clifford's personality has the added charm of a deep and tender sympathy with the weak and erring the Scotch reformer did not possess. During his long ministry there have gathered round him men who on some points are out of touch with his creed, and who may not approve of all his methods, but they have been attracted by the

genuineness of his culture and the sweep of his sympathy, and, above all, by the simplicity and tolerance of his spirit. To know Dr. Clifford is to feel a little more respect for manhood. His personality is reflected in every bit of the organisation at Westbourne Park. Its institutions have passed from the theological stage into agencies for social service, and are almost all occupied in relieving the strain and removing the stain of modern society. His Church, like himself, has moved forward with the times, not forsaking the old faith, but finding new applications.

In the campaign against the Education Act he has travelled from one end of the land to the other, addressing enormous meetings. Ever a fighter, he literally enjoys the war. Someone has said that controversy is a means of grace to John Clifford ; he hits hard, but does not lose his Christianity in the conflict. Amid the stress of almost continuous speaking, he has found time to send forth a stream of letters to the press containing information in such quantities that the average man is bewildered. More than one Liberal candidate has acknowledged that Dr. Clifford was the chief factor in the victory at the polls. Those who see him at a political demonstration, "strong, supple, sinew-corded, and apt at arms," think of him as the brilliant politician, who has done perhaps more than any other one man to awaken the country from its apathy and fix attention upon the injustice of modern legislation. There are others who delight to think of John Clifford the minister, the preacher to the unclassified community, meeting doubts fairly, not as a foe to science and modern thought, but as a student. He sits at the feet of the Sphinx still, patiently waiting for answers to the problems upon which men possessing but a tithe of his knowledge are prepared to speak with dogmatism. Dr. Clifford is often keenly analytical, but he is ever Christian ; there is no uncertainty about his faith. He probes with a strong hand and clear vision the questions that agitate the modern mind, but it is always with the



THE BAPTIST CHURCH HOUSE.

assurance of the one who looks to the Man Christ Jesus as the Saviour from sin. He has said, "I used to go about with John Foster's essay on 'Decision of Character,' and the essay on the 'Evils of Popular Ignorance,' until I had got their fire into my brain, their iron into my heart, and their richness of imaginative statement into my intellect, and if I can stand upright for a principle to-day, I owe it to that great John who had wonderful power in emptying chapels, and still more marvellous power in filling brains and hearts."

It is easy to trace the formative influences which have operated upon Dr. Clifford's thinking. He has lived in close association with the thoughts of Carlyle, Browning, Ruskin, and Emerson, but he is not a second-hand dealer in other men's ideas. Though he quotes perhaps more largely than any public speaker of our time, his message is his own. He knows that conviction, were it never so excellent, is worthless till it convert itself into conduct. Dr. Clifford is himself the best illustration of his teaching; he is the old warrior with the young enthusiasm who has for more than forty years been the trusted leader of young men. In the Westbourne Park Institute, there is an educational enterprise such as few Churches dream possible. Its many classes and clubs provide for the varied life of those who seek to develop spirit, mind, and body. It was a Polytechnic before the "Poly" became an institution. There is an amusing story told of Archbishop Alexander. He was travelling to Oxford with one of Dr. Clifford's deacons, who gave him a volume of the Doctor's sermons. A little while after the Archbishop preached in Westminster Abbey, and the sermon was wonderfully like a previous utterance from Westbourne Park pulpit. To the Archbishop's honour, he wrote a letter expressing his regret that he should have reproduced without acknowledgment so much of Dr. Clifford's thought. He said, "My mind was so saturated with your rich and nobly expressed thoughts, that I really somehow forgot that they were not my own until I had

preached. We differ upon a good many details of theology, and upon the whole line of politics, but I thoroughly respect and admire your thought, and remain your debtor." Dr. Nicoll puts this beside Mr. Balfour's sneer at Dr. Clifford's "style." If any reply to the ignorance betrayed in Mr. Balfour's utterance were necessary, it might be given in the words of the Archbishop.

Dr. Clifford's portrait is to hang in the Baptist Church House, and long after his voice has become a memory will speak to young men of a noble life consecrated to great ideals and devoted to the people's good. It would be possible to write the history of social reform in England during the last forty years in the biography of John Clifford. Multitudes of men of all creeds and of no creed look to him for guidance in the affairs of life. May he be long spared to respond to the call!

Far beyond the confines of the Baptist denomination the name of the Rev. F. B. Meyer is honoured and loved. He, like Wesley, could claim the world for his parish, and, unlike Wesley, he could justify the claim. He has preached "round the world." In America he is almost as well known as in England. In Russia, Finland, and under the shadow of Eastern temples he has told the story of the Cross. Mr. Meyer's early ministry is still remembered. He began his life-work in Richmond, while still engaged in his studies at Regent's Park College. He went to Liverpool to become assistant pastor to the Rev. C. M. Birrell, of Pembroke Chapel. Mr. Meyer has told us of the days he spent in endeavouring to fight with other men's weapons, and to wear the armour not made for himself. Later he went to York, and there met Mr. Moody. His heart was stirred with a desire to reach the people. From York he removed to Leicester. His early ministry did not satisfy him. He left the chapel to preach in the music hall, and from that time became a spiritual force with the democracy. Mr. Meyer had experienced an awakening of soul through his contact with Mr. Charles Studd, and

since then has devoted much of his energy to leading men in the Church to a clear apprehension of their privileges as Christians. At Leicester he began the Prison Gate Mission. For years he went down in the early morning to meet the newly discharged convicts. He invited them to breakfast, and over the morning meal talked of better things. To find work for them he started a firewood factory, which gave employment to a few. Others were placed out, and many remained to tell of the quiet, almost effeminate man whose words inspired hope in their hearts, and whose efforts won them back to manhood. When the account is made up of life's achievements, perhaps the greatest item to the credit of F. B. Meyer will be his disinterested care of the men who were regarded as society's wreckage, not worth saving.

Melbourne Hall, Leicester, now the scene of the ministry of Mr. Fullerton, the well-known evangelist, was built through Mr. Meyer's efforts, and became a centre of spiritual life. From Leicester Mr. Meyer came to Regent's Park, in succession to the Rev. David Davies, who had gone to the new Church at Brighton to begin what has proved to be a successful aggressive movement in London-by-the-Sea. Mr. Meyer's ministry at Regent's Park attracted men and women untouched by almost any pulpit in the metropolis. He is the Father Faber of Non-conformity, a true mystic, believing that the Spirit acts immediately upon the human spirit as well as through secondary causes. It is the touch of mysticism that makes Mr. Meyer what he is. From Regent's Park to Christ Church is not a long step ecclesiastically. Regent's Park is an open communion Church, offering a welcome to all who recognise Christ as their Saviour and desire to follow Him; Christ Church has no denominational restrictions. Dr. Newman Hall was determined to make it as broadly evangelical as a Church could be. It is a fitting memorial and continuation of the famous Surrey Chapel, in which ministered Rowland Hill, James Sherman, and Newman Hall. It is the cathedral of

London Nonconformity. It cost £62,000 to build and furnish. It has a conspicuous steeple known as the Lincoln Tower, which was subscribed for by Americans. In this handsome Gothic structure F. B. Meyer found his home. The liturgical service formed a link with the Church of England, and the free avenues of service made it possible to reach all sections of the one Church. Mr. Meyer is a Baptist, but not in a denominational sense. He belongs to the Church universal. Few men have achieved such varied work. Mr. Meyer remarks that Christ Church stands between St. Thomas's Hospital and Bedlam Lunatic Asylum: one seeks to care for the body, the other for the mind, while Christ Church cares for the soul. In recent years, however, Christ Church has undertaken a wider ministry, and in its care for the soul does not forget either the mind or the body. A list of the services and societies at Christ Church gives an idea of what a well-organised Church may be. On Monday Mr. Meyer often conducts the "Women's 'At-home.'" Hawkstone Hall on such occasions is usually filled with three or four hundred mothers, whose babies are being cared for in the crèche below. The women are seated round little tables, at the head of which is a ministering sister. Tea and biscuits are provided for a halfpenny. The place is bright with flowers and cheerful with music. One of Mr. Meyer's happy ideas was to have some canaries in cages about the room and little things on the tables to give a new conception of home to the women. Those who have only heard Mr. Meyer on the platform of a convention would be surprised to hear his plain, almost blunt speech to the women. He urges them to continue their courting days, and gives homely advice such as few men would care, even if they knew how, to speak. On Tuesdays there are services for children, and on Wednesdays a "sunrise prayer-meeting" at a quarter to eight in the morning. On Saturday there is a social hour, at which Mr. Meyer presides, and to which men of the poorest type are gathered. The P.S.A. on the Sunday afternoon is one of the largest in

London. The men welcome Mr. Meyer almost as children welcome the father they love. They have given him many touching tokens of their affection, and many of them can tell of changed lives through his ministry. Christ Church seems to possess a club for everybody. On Sunday afternoons some of the workers have gone round the street corners collecting a company of "hooligans," and taken them to the Lambeth Baths for coffee and drill, and in between a talk about better things. There are sisters who devote their time to factory girls and the children of costermongers. Christ Church has become a centre for ministerial and missionary conferences, and for "quiet days" of prayer and consecration. These "Protestant Retreats" have been of great help to tired ministers, who in the quietness and the dim religious light of Christ Church have not only found rest, but have learned new conceptions of the service of God.

Mr. Meyer has been the President of the London Baptist Association. He is still a personal member of the Baptist Union, and not a few hope to see him its president. In the wider ministry of the Churches Mr. Meyer's name has become associated with what is known as "Keswick" teaching. As President of the National Free Church Council Mr. Meyer fulfilled an enormous number of engagements. He has told us of his railway ministry, by which he has divided his time between the pulpit and the train. Mr. Meyer's books are read wherever the English language is spoken. He has chiefly written upon Scripture characters, and has shown an analytical power of devotional treatment as rare as it is beautiful. In recent years Mr. Meyer has paid greater attention to social service. Quite recently he was a successful candidate for the office of parish councillor. Not that he hoped to give much time to committees, as indeed he ought not to do, but to induce other men to regard the administration of the affairs of their town as a sphere of Christian service.

At the Northfield Convention Mr. Meyer was a great

favourite. More than one attempt has been made to woo him from the English pastorate. Happily the attempts have failed. Under Mr. Moody's direction arrangements were made for Mr. Meyer to visit the principal cities of the United States, and since the death of the great evangelist Mr. Meyer has gone over the old ground hallowed by the memories of Moody to preach the Gospel and to expound the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Upon one occasion Mr. Meyer, to emphasise his belief in the Spirit as the supreme Administrator of the Church, vacated the chair at the business meeting. Perhaps in this Mr. Meyer has rendered great service to ministers, that he has recalled their attention to the forgotten truth that for individual Churches, as well as the Church universal, there is the guidance of the Spirit. Successful workers are co-operators with the Unseen Presence rather than originators.

Dr. Maclaren has been for more than fifty years in the full light of public life. He stands among the foremost of the world's preachers, and has been given the pre-eminence which is the privilege of very few that in a materialistic age his voice still calls men not in vain to the consideration of the spiritual verities. Baptists have been rich in great men, but no greater expositor has been given to their pulpits than Alexander Maclaren. He was born in the city of Glasgow in 1826. His father, Mr. David Maclaren, a city merchant, who was well known among Christian people as a helper of good works and a preacher of considerable gifts, was for a number of years one of the pastors, or, as he would have called it, one of the elders, of the John Street Scotch Baptist Church. The Scotch Baptists differ from their English brethren mainly upon the questions of the ministry and the Lord's Supper. They do not believe in a one-man ministry, neither do they give their ministers any stipend. They celebrate the Lord's Supper every Lord's day. They are keen students of the Scriptures and strong opponents of clericalism. They do not think that it lowers the dignity of the preacher for it to be known that he

follows the Apostles' example in supporting himself by manual labour. Mr. Maclaren, through changes in his business, left Glasgow for Adelaide in 1836. He held the position of manager of a South Australian Company, and during his residence in the Colony did much for its young institutions and the Free Churches.

Alexander Maclaren remained in Glasgow. He attended the ministry of the Rev. James Paterson, by whom he was baptised in 1838, and afterwards received into fellowship. Among his school-fellows was Principal Rainy, the Moderator of the United Free Church of Scotland. Very early Dr. Maclaren acquired the habit of patient plodding, which enabled him when he became a student in Stepney College to learn to read a chapter of the Scriptures in the Greek and the Hebrew every day. The Examination Committee, whose business it was to interview students for the ministry, were not quite sure of Alexander Maclaren. Some thought he looked too much of a boy; one of them at least had the gift of insight. The Rev. Samuel Green returning home announced that "the committee had passed a Scotch lad, named Maclaren, who would cut all the others out." The Rev. Thomas Binney was then the most prominent of London ministers and the model for young students. Dr. Maclaren says that one day the veteran of King's Weigh House Chapel gave him a hint upon preaching. He said "Just stand on your hind legs and talk." In after years the grand old man heard Dr. Maclaren preach the now famous sermon on the Secret of Power for the Missionary Society at Surrey Chapel. Mr. Binney was so deeply moved by the eloquent appeal, that when at the close of the service a friend asked him what he thought of the discourse, he was too overcome by emotion to reply. Afterwards he said, "I went straight home and wept, for I had not reached and indeed had scarcely tried to reach so high."

Portland Chapel, Southampton, was built for three hundred worshippers. Its early history had not been promising. The

Rev. John Pulsford went from Stepney College to its pulpit and preached there for several years. The gifted mystic, whose "Quiet Hours" has been a delight and a help to so many in strengthening their deathless hope, was hardly appreciated by the Southampton people. Perhaps they did not understand him. The congregation was made up of persons representing varieties of opinion. It was a Union Church, and for some time a "Cave of Adullam." Alexander Maclaren came as student supply in 1845. The congregation liked him, but were not quite sure. They therefore invited him for three months. At the end of the period the experiment had so far succeeded that the cautious deacons proposed to invite him to the ministry, but his College course was not completed. He desired to complete his studies in the classics, and the Church agreed to wait for a year. The young preacher sometimes startled his hearers by the boldness of his treatment of almost threadbare subjects. The impression made upon the minds of timid people was that Mr. Maclaren had left the old paths of orthodoxy; indeed, he had, so far as the conventional statements were concerned, but it was the old evangel in the new dress which he presented. He has been true to the message he received in his early life. He says "Our message implies that sin is a universal reality, from which there is no deliverance but through Jesus." In Southampton Alexander Maclaren learned how to preach. Sometimes his peroration was as unique as it was sensible. He would exclaim "I have no more to say." Some of his hearers, who had listened with great delight, were anything but pleased by this abrupt termination. They wanted the preacher to continue, but he had learned the lesson most difficult for the man in the pulpit—to stop when he had no more to say.

'Claudius Clear' has written that "Perhaps no preacher has ever ploughed so straight and sharp a furrow across the field of life, never looking aside, never turning back," as Dr. Maclaren. In many ways he had been the most influential

preacher of his age, but his chief concern has been that he should present the Gospel as clearly as he could. In the early days he gave much time to lecturing upon miscellaneous subjects. Upon the platform of the old Athenæum in Southampton, he was an attractive and popular expositor. His lectures on Church and State might be republished with advantage. He endeavoured to organise classes for young men. He started to teach Greek. The class was well announced, and promised to be successful. Forty young men joined. The first lesson was given, but after a few weeks only four remained. At the end of the lesson the teacher turned out the gas as he said, "Thus is extinguished my attempt to illuminate the young men of Southampton." He was prevailed upon, however, to conduct classes at the Athenæum. During this time he was learning that the pulpit was his vocation, and he steadily lost taste for all that interfered with his preaching.

Dr. Maclaren went to Manchester in 1858. The church was founded sixteen years earlier. By its constitution it was necessary that the pastor should be a Baptist, and that the only form of baptism practised should be immersion. Its fellowship was open to all Christians without distinction. The Rev. Francis Tucker had been its minister until he removed to London, where he acquired considerable reputation as a preacher. A strong Evangelical in his beliefs, and possessing considerable pulpit power, he had exercised an influential ministry. He had the fancy of a poet, and the tenderness of a girl. It was not easy to follow such a man, but under Dr. Maclaren's pastorate the work grew, until it became necessary to build a larger chapel. It was agreed to move out of the city, and a fine site facing Whitworth Park was secured. The ground and the building cost £22,000; the money was not raised without great effort, though many generous givers came to the assistance of the minister. There is seating accommodation for 1,400 people, but when necessary

nearly 2,000 can find room. It is the Baptist cathedral of Lancashire. Its many works are well known throughout the denomination.

Dr. Maclaren, in connection with the centenary of the oldest of the Australian colonies, and the jubilee of Victoria, in 1883, went upon a visit to the Australian churches, with a view to assisting the brethren in the work of Church extension. Everywhere he was received with open arms. All denominations united in the generous welcome given to the representative of the Baptist Union. It had been proposed to raise a fund of £50,000, to which a wealthy Victorian merchant had promised one-half of the amount. At the close of Dr. Maclaren's tour it was found that the sum was not far short of £100,000, and great gratitude was expressed by the Churches for the spiritual stimulus they had received. In 1897, Dr. Maclaren finished fifty-years of public ministry, and completed thirty-eight years of pastoral life in Manchester, and attained his seventieth birthday. It was a unique year, and was made the occasion to convey to Dr. Maclaren the gratitude of the larger Church to which he had preached through the printed page. He was honoured as few ministers have been. It was not forgotten that he was a Baptist, but it was remembered that he was in the front rank of expositors of the Scriptures. No presentation in the city of Manchester attracted so large a diversity of interests. It was proposed to erect a statue in his honour, similar to that erected to the memory of his friends, John Bright and Bishop Fraser, but finally it was determined to present his portrait to the city Art Gallery. The money was subscribed, and the president of the Scottish Academy was commissioned to paint the picture. Not only Manchester, but England joined in honouring Dr. Maclaren. Bishop Moorhouse, at a public banquet, said, "Thirty years ago I was studying with great profit the published sermons of the man whom we are honouring to-day, in an age which has been charmed and inspired by the sermons of Newman and Robertson of Brighton ;

there were no public discourses which for profundity of thought, logical arrangement, eloquence of appeal and power over the human heart exceeded in merit those of Dr. Maclaren." Professor Ward declared that Dr. Maclaren was the chief literary influence in the city. Baptist ministers had a function of their own in honour of their great chief. Over four hundred pastors of Churches assembled at a complimentary breakfast. Rev. Charles Williams had charge of the arrangements, and Dr. Angus presided. There was a distinguished company and an address was presented. The old students of Stepney College also presented a complimentary address, and all the Churches united in honouring Dr. Maclaren. The Baptist Union again called the Doctor to the presidency. His address at the City Temple, when he stood by the side of Dr. Parker, will not be forgotten. It was upon the subject of preaching, and his words upon Jesus, the preacher's theme, created a deep impression. Half a century of successful service was summarised in the counsels he offered the younger brethren. At the autumnal meeting in Edinburgh, he spoke upon Evangelical Mysticism, and revealed another side of his varied mind. Since his retirement from the pastorate at Manchester, he has rarely appeared in the pulpit or upon the public platform, but the publication of his sermons is continued, and his legacy to preachers will be a complete re-issue of his expositions and discourses.

Dr. Glover, of Bristol, is known and loved wherever there are Baptists. He belongs to an order of preachers who rarely receive their due from the public during their lifetime. Popularity is an unaccountable thing ; some men die to achieve it, others are crippled by it, and it may be others are breaking their hearts that it does not come their way. Some preachers are too good ever to be popular. T. T. Lynch, Robertson, Maurice, David Thomas, Edward White and James Martineau were never popular in the modern sense. Their congregations put together would not be larger than some audiences drawn

by men whose highest flights in the realm of thought ended lower down than the level from which these took their rise. It must not be supposed that Dr. Glover is unpopular. He is a personal force in the denomination; though not a Scotchman, he has a touch of the brogue, and more than a little of the caution associated with men from the other side of the Tweed. After a course of study at Edinburgh University, he went to King's College, and then for four years to the Presbyterian College. He was led to change his views concerning baptism, and was immersed by Dr. Landels the same evening as Mr. Vincent Tymms, who afterwards became the distinguished principal of Rawdon College. Dr. Glover went to the Blackfriars Church, Glasgow; in a city famous for great preachers, he gained considerable influence. He delivered a series of monthly lectures, specially arranged for young people. In 1867, Dr. Landels suggested that he should be asked to take part in the missionary meetings, and the new man from Glasgow preached one of the sermons. Since then, no great missionary demonstration has been complete without the presence of Dr. Glover. It cannot be told how much the Society owes to his influence. When Mr. Baynes began his forward movement, Dr. Glover was among the first to render support. He has travelled through China with Mr. Morris, of Ipswich, cheering the missionaries, and gaining first-hand information.

When the new Baptist Church was built in 1869, in one of the wealthy districts of Bristol, Dr. Glover became the pastor, and Tyndale Chapel became the centre of a new type of Baptist Church life. Tyndale is essentially the church of the well-to-do. It has become the home of distinguished workers, and those whose generosity has been munificent. Not only in the Bristol district to colleges, poor churches and missions, but far away to the distant Congo and China, the Bristol congregation has sent representatives and means. Dr. Glover is known through his expositions in the *Sunday School*

Chronicle and the little volume of "Notes on the Gospel according to St. Mark." Many have wished that his writings were more numerous. In the councils of the Baptist Union, he has taken a prominent part. In the small controversies he never forgets the grace of courtesy. His large experience and practical wisdom enable him to speak with authority. It is impossible to know him without deriving help from the spirituality of his character. Some men carry the hall-mark of their calling upon their countenance. It is not often that nature allows a mask to grow old in the wearing. Reality comes through, especially in the matters of the spirit, and reproduces itself. Dr. Glover is essentially a spiritual force. He belongs to the type of preachers who lift the pulpit to a higher level. Cosmopolitan in his sympathies and catholic in his tastes, he has been associated with many movements beyond the boundaries of his own denomination.

In the struggles for religious freedom, next to the name of Dr. Clifford, stands that of the Rev. J. G. Greenhough, M.A. For many years his power was unknown outside his own denomination, but in Leicester and the Baptist Churches generally the distinctiveness of his personality and the quality of his work gave him a place among the elect few. When he became President of the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches, the wider public discovered with surprise what Baptists had known for many years. Mr. Greenhough's visit to Jamaica, in the interests of the Churches, was fraught with great results to the visitor as well as to the Churches. From that time, his preaching developed new elements and an evangelical fervour not conspicuous in his earlier ministry. He is a student; perhaps few men give more attention to the preparation of their public utterances than Mr. Greenhough. It is told that in his garden at Leicester, upon which he has bestowed great pains, for gardening is his hobby, he has thought out many a sermon. He has wonderful concentration of mind. It almost gives the impression of absent-mindedness. Largely gifted with genius, he has never forgotten that ability

is perfected by toil. One hardly knows which to admire most, the strength of his thought, or the beauty of his language. In the pulpit he is a prophet of hope. He makes the future not clearer, but less to be dreaded. Few men can speak such tender words, perhaps because few have been more intimate friends with pain. Upon the public platform, he is a stern prophet of righteousness. He has the gift of sarcasm, and delights in its use. His thrusts are more than pin-pricks, and his taunts become proverbs. In the public life of Leicester he has been a great religious force, and in the larger life of the nation during the last ten years he has occupied a conspicuous place. Who will forget his utterances upon Church and State? He has painted with grim truth the State as the guardian of our person and our property, enforcing its care and compelling the observance of its compacts. A State having power can compel, and that it may compel, it can punish. The Church is a society for diffusing happiness and proclaiming righteousness. Its chief weapon is the Gospel, its method is persuasion. Church and State have mutual obligations, but when the Church becomes the servant of the State, it becomes an arm of civil service, and loses in spirituality. Even good men called to be advisers in the pulpit to-day may to-morrow play the autocrat. Such is the teaching of Mr. Greenhough, enforced by a wealth of irony and sarcasm and clear-cut logic, which make it impossible to be indifferent to the argument and appeal. In the Baptist denomination, Mr. Greenhough has done much in the direction of promoting greater efficiency in the ministry. He recognises that most of the problems are to be solved by the man in the pulpit. To raise the ministry is to elevate the Church, and to this Mr. Greenhough, as chairman of the Ministerial Committee of the Baptist Union, has devoted his chief attention.

In London, the Rev. J. R. Wood, of Holloway,¹ has for many years been recognised as a true pastor. The recent census carried out by the *Daily News*, showed that Mr. Wood had a large, as well as a devoted, congregation. In pastoral work

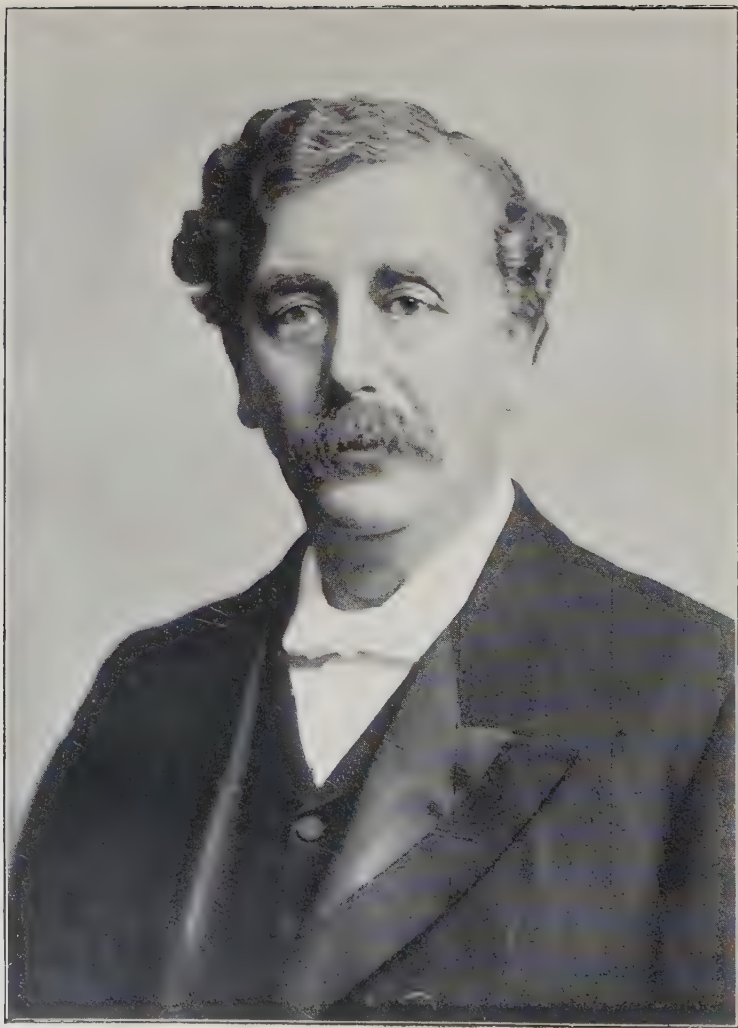
he has become the friend of the suffering and the weak, and upon the religious life of the district his personality is impressed. The London Baptist Association has for many years found him a trusted counsellor and ready helper. He has travelled throughout the country, giving assistance to weaker Churches, and, like a true father[†] in Israel, has cared most for the feeblest members of the family. Associated with Mr. Wood in good works in London there was a little group of men whose presence is sorely missed. Mr. Chown, of Bloomsbury, whose robust thought and genial personality made him a great attraction to young people; Father Wigner, for many years the Secretary and Editor of the "Psalms and Hymns" Trust, was a familiar figure in the gatherings of the London Baptist Association. He lectured and travelled for the Trust all over the country, and was the means of distributing among the widows and orphans of the denomination nearly £20,000. He was three times President of the London Association, and in 1889 occupied the chair of the Baptist Union. Among the men of an earlier time, perhaps the most distinct personality was the Rev. Henry Platten. For five years he ministered to Maze Pond Church. It was thought that he would become one of the foremost men in London. His eloquence compelled attention. He drew a large congregation of earnest and thoughtful young men. He was a mystic in the best sense, and in his speech there was the warmth of the old prophetic fire. He dwelt in the realm of lofty ideals, and spake like a seer. He was a dreamer of dreams, but he helped to make his dreams come true. During his Birmingham ministry he was the means of bringing several young men into the pastorate, the most conspicuous among them being the Rev. Charles Brown, of Ferme Park. In Mr. Platten's class for local preachers Charles Brown saw the vision which was to indicate his vocation. He applied for admission to Bristol College, and was accepted in 1879. After three years' study under the direction of Dr. Gotch, he removed to Kings Stanley, and from there to Nailsworth, before finding his home, in 1889,

at Ferme Park. The Church which numbered hardly more than fifty when Mr. Brown became its minister, now counts in its fellowship nearly a thousand members. Mr. Brown delivered a course of ten lectures to the students of Regent's Park College, which Professor Gould says showed that he could be as effective in the lecturer's desk as in the pulpit. His two volumes of published sermons have had a good circulation, and indicate the quality of his pulpit work. His preaching has the ring of intense reality, and the wooing note of the shepherd of souls.

The London pulpit contains another Brown, known through the denomination and loved by all who know him. Archibald G. Brown, whose name will ever be associated with East London, has been for many years one of the greatest pulpit forces in England. The story of the East London Tabernacle is a romance, and the central figure in it is among the few who stand out as great preachers. For over forty years A. G. Brown has been talking to great congregations. During his long ministry in the East End, he was faced by between three and four thousand persons, at each service. His Saturday night prayer meeting was usually larger than the audience at the neighbouring music hall. Born in 1844, he spent a happy childhood in Clapham, and while quite young gave his heart to his Lord. He gives the account himself. He says, "The Lord saved me in the spring of 1861; a young lady whom I met casually at a gathering of friends asked me if I had heard Captain Blackwood, who was delivering addresses at his house at Streatham. I promised to go; the place was very crowded, and I was greatly impressed by the speaker's physical beauty—he used to be known in London society as 'Beauty Blackwood.' At the close of the meeting, he came up to me, and asked me if I was a Christian? I told him frankly I was not. I left the place angry. Returning home over Tooting Common, a deep conviction of sin laid hold of me." A few weeks after, he was baptised by C. H. Spurgeon. Mr. Brown's father was closely associated with the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and it was but

natural that his son should become intimately connected with Mr. Spurgeon. He entered the Pastors' College, and began his ministry at Stepney Green, after having spent three useful years at Bromley. The old chapel in East London was soon too small for those who were anxious to listen to the voice of the new preacher. With splendid audacity, Mr. Brown determined upon the building of the Tabernacle, and in 1872, when he was but twenty-eight, the work began. The Tabernacle was by far the largest place of worship in East London. Many prophesied that it would be a wilderness of empty pews, but during Mr. Brown's pastorate, the crowds flocked to its doors. It became the centre of one of the most remarkable ministries London has known. Mr. Brown is a conservative by training and a socialist by instinct. He could not be content with the old routine of Church organisation. He began an Orphanage, which has since provided for the maintenance of some hundreds of children. He opened mission stations, until a large number of the Church members were regularly engaged away from the Tabernacle during the times of service. He was the means of a block of buildings being secured and let at cheap rents to respectable people. His contribution to social reform was not in speech, but in action. He has, perhaps, never appeared upon a political platform or taken part in a labour demonstration, but the toilers of East London knew perfectly well it was not because his sympathies were not with movements for social betterment, but because he realised that his life-work was in the ministry of the word. "This one thing I do" has been his motto, and the work of his life has no competitor in his desires. One cannot imagine A. G. Brown being anything else but a Baptist minister. In the old days of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, no preacher was more acceptable in the absence of C. H. Spurgeon than Mr. Brown. Many hoped that he would have been associated with Mr. Thomas Spurgeon in the pastorate. He has been among the readiest to render service under the changed conditions. During his presidency of the London Baptist Association, Chatsworth Road Chapel, West

Norwood, was built. When the strain upon Mr. Brown's health made him feel that it was impossible to remain in the East End, the West Norwood Congregation turned to him, urging the poverty of their condition as a reason for his becoming their pastor. Perhaps no man should remain in East London for more than twenty years as the minister of one Church; the continual strain is almost beyond endurance. The constant presence of suffering and of sin in its deeper and grosser forms must blunt the finer feelings. To become familiar with sin makes it almost impossible not either to lower the standard of purity, or to know the heart-break that cannot be continued for many years. Mr. Charrington at the Great Assembly Hall, Mr. Brown's Baptist neighbour, has spent most of his life in the slums of Stepney and Mile End, but he has not the strain of continuous pulpit work. Mr. Brown was the centre of the Tabernacle activity, the mainspring to the watch. His work in West Norwood is so recent that it is needless to describe it; new schools have been erected and paid for, the empty chapel is thronged with worshippers, and the preacher, though his hair has whitened, and his voice is hoarse with years of speaking, and some of the sweeter notes are missed, is still the same master of words and doctor of the soul. He can sketch with rare skill from life, and discover in a threadbare phrase a beauty of meaning and a depth of spirituality most men would not have seen. In the Puritan days, he might have been a military officer; he cannot help being a soldier. He belongs to the Church militant. Whatever he does, he does with a whole heart. He stands for the old-fashioned Evangelicalism which has somewhat disappeared from London pulpits. He may be mistaken over many interpretations of the truth, but there is never any question as to the sincerity of this man. To the work of soul-winning, he has given undivided attention, and it is not too much to say that there is no man in the London ministry who has been so blest to the awakening of the spiritual life in others as Archibald Brown.



REV. J. H. SHAKESPEARE, M.A.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY FUND, AND THE NEW OUTLOOK

IN 1898 the Council of the Baptist Union determined to recommend the assembly to ask the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, M.A., to become its secretary. The invitation was given and accepted. Mr. Shakespeare was trained under the ministry of the Rev. James Thew, of Leicester, and in Regent's Park College. His only pastorate was at St. Mary's Gate, Norwich, where his preaching recalled the best traditions of a long succession of gifted men. Some of Mr. Shakespeare's friends thought that the denomination could ill afford to spare so promising a preacher to become an official. He had gained the sympathetic ear of a large public. Upon the platform, he had taken rank with the leaders. Among the younger men, he was the most distinguished personality. His work for Church extension was bearing fruit. Mr. Shakespeare does not hold the view that a secretary should be a clerk to register a committee's decisions. He helps to make the decisions. Gifted with a touch of statesmanship, and a vision of a great future for the English Baptists, he was the man for the time, and has already shown that in him the denomination possesses a helmsman who "will hold the tiller true."

The President, when Mr. Shakespeare came to office, was the Rev. S. Vincent, whose unassuming character and solid work are familiar to the people of Plymouth. In his address from the chair he suggested that a Twentieth Century Fund should be raised. He said "What if, as another century closes, we Baptists were to be of Carey's mind in expecting and attempting?

What if this same Jesus be calling us to-day to let Him do more through us in our Churches for this our fatherland? I am persuaded that multitudes of us are prayerfully eager to see clearly what God wants to do through us that we may attempt it forthwith. As a denomination we lodge at the Mission House, and have no home of our own in the metropolis of the world. Would it be no advantage to our great and growing spiritual work, to our community and our extension, to have a building that might house many, if not all our Baptist societies under one roof? May we not hope that the idea of extension has so occupied our minds, and its urgency so stirred our consciences, that we all everywhere throughout the land count it the very call of Christ to go forward?" The Assembly did not quite know whether to take the proposal seriously or as the day-dream of a visionary. In the General Purposes Committee, held on the same day, the present writer asked whether a sub-committee was to consider the matter, and a committee was appointed. The writer was asked more in fun than in earnest to put any suggestions on paper, so that they might be sent round to the members of the committee before they met. Proposals were made, which under the enthusiasm of Mr. Shakespeare, expanded to such an extent that they became his own creations. The Council agreed to recommend that a special fund, called the Baptist Union Twentieth Century Fund, be formed to raise at least a quarter-of-a-million pounds, for the following objects:—£125,000 for the evangelisation of our own country and Church extension in districts where the religious need is not met by other evangelical Churches; £30,000 for the assistance of weaker Churches, to enable them to maintain their pastors; another £30,000 for the Annuity Fund for aged ministers and the widows of ministers; £6,000 for the establishment of scholarships open to students in Baptist colleges who intend entering the home ministry; £34,000 for the erection of a Baptist Church House; and £25,000 for educational and other objects,

which in the judgment of the Council might appear desirable in the interests of the denomination. The proposals awakened great enthusiasm. Dr. Spurgeon immediately promised £500. Generous help was given, and very soon the first £50,000 was in sight. The late Mr. Henry Wood, Treasurer of the Baptist Union, was full of contagious enthusiasm. He seemed to live for the accomplishment of this object upon which he had set his heart. In the metropolis he was the leader. No trouble seemed too much, no time too great to bestow upon it. The London Baptist Association organised conferences. Mr. Wood held receptions, and everywhere made the fund popular. His home-going after he had written a letter of appeal for the Fund—indeed before the letter was finished his strength was gone—made a profound impression upon the Churches, and became one of the most powerful pleas for generous help. Mr. Herbert Marnham was elected Treasurer of the Union and one of the treasurers of the Special Fund. His name has been honourably associated for generations with Baptist work. Mr. Marnham unites the qualities of the keen man of business and the zealous Christian. His generosity has been an inspiration to other rich men, and his devotion has sometimes made ministers ashamed. Two other treasurers were elected—Sir John Barran, of Leeds, the grand old man, whose life story is itself an inspiration. A Londoner by birth, the son of a gun-maker, he went to the West Riding to seek a means of livelihood, and at the age of twenty-five entered Leeds as assistant in a clothier's establishment. He speedily acquired a knowledge of the trade, and by strict economy was enabled to enter business upon his own account. He was successful. The invention of the sewing-machine by Howe in 1846, and the application of steam to the cutting out of clothing, were quickly utilised by Mr. Barran to extend his business. His factory grew until he was known far and wide as the "little boy's tailor," and his work-people became a great army. He gave attention to those who helped to build up his business, and

until the last it was to him a pleasure to assist in any effort for the improvement of the condition of the working classes. To elementary education he devoted thought and money. He was one of the founders of the Yorkshire College, and a member of the board of governors; afterwards chairman of the Finance Committee, in which position he had an important share in raising the funds on behalf of the college. He headed the list by a donation of £5,000, and succeeded in begging nearly £30,000 more. When Leeds University was inaugurated, he gave generous assistance, and was honoured by the Senate conferring upon him the honorary degree of LL.D. Mr. Barran was a sturdy Radical, and became Member of Parliament for his adopted city. In 1880 it was feared that Mr. Gladstone, who had roused the indignation of Europe by his denunciation of the Bulgarian atrocities, and had determined to contest the constituency of Midlothian, might not be returned to Parliament. The Liberals of Leeds nominated John Barran and W. E. Gladstone as their candidates. Mr. Barran carried through the campaign, and when the poll was declared Gladstone had secured twenty-four thousand six hundred votes, and Barran just one thousand less. It was a splendid tribute not only to the Liberal leader, but to the energy and devotion of his colleague in the representation of Leeds. Mr. Gladstone determined to sit for Midlothian, and his son, Mr. Herbert, was accepted for Leeds. Sir John Barran was one of Lord Rosebery's baronets, and Baptists rejoiced in the honour conferred upon him. Through a long life he had been loyal to the denomination, and has rarely missed an opportunity of subscribing to its funds or of engaging in its service.

The third treasurer was Mr. R. V. Barrow, J.P., of Croydon, whose long association with Dr. James Spurgeon has been marked by generous support to denominational movements. Mr. Barrow was associated with his brother in the firm of Samuel Barrow & Co., doing an extensive business in England and the Colonies. For several years he represented

Bermondsey in Parliament, and had the honour of introducing a Bill for the equalisation of the London poor rate. His great experience, in conjunction with the two other treasurers, enabled the Council to invest the funds as they came in, so that by the end of the time the interest was a considerable item.

How the Twentieth Century Fund was raised has been told by the secretary. Dr. Maclaren, Dr. Clifford, Mr. Cuff, and a host of ready helpers engaged in a campaign in the Churches, which resulted in a generous response from almost every district. The Young People's Section was well worked by the Rev. A. F. Riley, Mr. Collier, and Mr. Parkinson. The children sent subscriptions, and the golden harvest was gathered in. Of course there were some times of anxiety. At the first session of the Union, on Monday, the 28th of April, 1902, the secretary reported that there was still £9,000 to be obtained, and it was announced that the Fund would close by the Thursday morning. A collection was taken, the ministers and delegates promised further help, the London Baptist Association guaranteed £1,000, and on the Wednesday Mr. and Mrs. John Chivers called at the Mission House to see Mr. Shakespeare, and announced that £5,000 would be given by members of their family and one or two friends in memory of Mr. William Chivers, J.P., whose recent death had been such a blow to the denomination. There remained but £326 to raise. Mr. Marnham was communicated with, and he generously replied that he would complete the amount. A similar message, however, had been received from Mr. Edward Robinson, J.P., of Bristol. They divided the honour between them, and on the Thursday morning the delegates met in Bloomsbury, all anxious to hear the announcement concerning the Fund. It was felt that to fail in raising the amount would be a discredit to the denomination. The poor men had done all they were able to do. They prayed that generous help might still be forthcoming. The magnificent gift of the Chivers

family had been kept secret. The scene in Bloomsbury was dramatic. Mr. Shakespeare rose to announce the condition of the Fund. His face gave no indication of what had happened. He was as grave and as pale as ever. Very quietly he stepped to the desk and said: "Mr. President and Brethren, it is with profound thankfulness that I report to-day that our Twentieth Century Fund effort has been crowned with complete success." The audience waited for no more. By common impulse they rose to their feet and sang the Doxology. They cheered as if they knew not when to be silent again. Some minutes passed before Mr. Shakespeare could proceed. Then he expressed the gratitude they all felt to the Divine Lord who had crowned their efforts with success. It was not a figure of speech that he used when he said, "Unseen hands have added gold to the centenary offering, the hands of the loved and departed."

The results of the Centenary Fund are not to be counted in money and in new buildings. Baptists, in their effort to raise £250,000, discovered something of their own strength and the value of corporate action. It was shown that the Churches were ready to respond to those who could lead in enterprises worthy of the time. Their loyalty to principle was strengthened, and something like a passion for the extension of the kingdom of God was generated. The grants for chapel building have awakened zeal all over the country. The £125,000 for Church extension will necessarily mean the raising of a very much larger amount by local effort. Where a Church applies for a grant of £1,000 towards the erection of an additional place of worship in a new neighbourhood, it will require at least £2,000 more to secure the help of the central Fund. For the first time in their history the Baptists have a metropolitan headquarters for their Union of which they need not be ashamed. At the eastern angle formed by the junction of Southampton Row with Holborn, the imposing block of buildings known as the Baptist Church House bears silent

witness to the loyalty and sacrifice of those who raised the Twentieth Century Fund, from which £34,000 was allocated toward the cost of the buildings, though the undertaking cost not much less than £50,000. Previous to the widening of Southampton Row a narrow thoroughfare, Kingsgate Street, stood parallel to it. When the County Council determined upon the improvement it necessitated the demolition of the old place of worship known in the early days as Eagle Street Baptist Chapel. The Church meeting there had a varied history, parts of which were lit up by the presence of gifted men in the pulpit. The Church House is not severely ecclesiastical, though the design is classic. On the corner is a statue of John Bunyan, and inside there is to be a life-sized marble figure of C. H. Spurgeon. In the council chamber there is a medallion of Robert Hall, and over the mantel a fine piece of work by Mr. Tinworth, showing the freeing of the slaves, with William Knibb standing by. In the visitors' room there is the famous picture of the baptism of the Redeemer. Over the fireplace is a large terra cotta panel representing a scene from the "Pilgrim's Progress." It was the gift of Messrs. Doulton in memory of the late Mr. James Doulton. The panel in the council chamber was the gift of Mr. Scott Durrant. The library is a beautiful room, handsomely panelled in oak. In the bookcases there is the larger part of the late C. H. Spurgeon's private collection of Puritan and theological works. Mr. Spurgeon's library was bought by a committee of students from his college, and presented to the Church House and to village ministers. On the ground floor there is the publishing department and some other shops. The Church House, it is hoped, will provide a home for all the Baptist Union departments and organisations. Its erection marks a new era in Baptist history which will always be associated with the name of J. H. Shakespeare.

During recent years something more has been done than the raising of money, important as that is. According to an

estimate of the progress of the denominations, the Baptists in the British Isles have increased during the last ten years by almost the same proportion as the population. During the period between 1875 and 1890 the denomination increased by 32 per cent. Mr. Charles Booth has shown that the Baptist Churches are living organisms, as well as religious organisations. The *Daily News* census bears eloquent tribute to the vitality of London Baptists. New enterprises have been started to which future generations will look back with gratitude. Something has been attempted to improve the efficiency of the ministry. The preacher, like John Bunyan's pilgrim, carries the key of liberty, but too often forgets that it is in his possession. The day in which the weak untrained minister could succeed has passed. It is a great advance simply to realise that our ministers must not fight the modern battles of righteousness with the antiquated weapons of their ancestors. The value of the local preacher has been rediscovered. Long ago Baptists were familiar with the men who toiled during the week at their trade or taught in their schools, and on the Lord's Day went forth to proclaim the glad tidings of the Gospel of peace. During recent years the local preacher has been overlooked. Baptists have much to learn from their Methodist brethren in the utilisation of the gifts to minister possessed by business men. We claim to be without a special priesthood; Baptists believe in the priesthood of all believers. They repudiate the distinction implied in the terms "clerical" and "lay" as distinguishing different classes of men. There is no room for the cleric in the Baptist pulpit, and yet Baptists have to recognise the value of the local preacher. The new scheme for a national organisation owes its inception to the Rev. Charles Joseph, and seems likely to succeed. In many districts the people are too poor to support a minister, and there is not enough for a minister to do during the week. In such spheres the solution of the problem is the local preacher. In the towns and cities there is a growing number of

additional services. Each Church will before long have its mission hall, and there again the business man is needed. There is real danger of clericalism in unsuspected quarters. Perhaps it was not without good reason that Dr. Maclaren declared that "officialism was the dry rot of the Churches, and was found as rampant amongst democratic Nonconformists as amongst the more hierarchical communities." Another new organisation is the Young People's Guild, which will help the youth of the Baptist Churches to know more of the distinctive principles for which they stand. It will develop study with a view to equipping young men for social service and giving a clearer apprehension of the teaching of the Scriptures. The most important new departure, however, is what we hope to see become the "Colonial Aid Society." The missionary revival which characterised the opening years of the old century had for its object the salvation of the heathen; the missionary enterprise at the dawn of the twentieth century does not forget the heathen abroad, but it thinks more than it used to do of the heathen at home. The Baptist South African, Colonial and Missionary Aid Society seeks to carry the Gospel to our fellow-subjects, especially those in the land so recently the scene of war. It sends messages of peace and goodwill to the white population and to the black. It is in its babyhood as an institution, but during the last year it has raised considerably over £500. Its very existence is a stimulus to struggling Churches in districts where men seem to live only to satisfy their greed for gold. The secretary, Mr. Howard Henson, is the moving spirit of the enterprise. To his initiative and zeal the Society owes its existence. Mr. Goddard Clarke, J.P., L.C.C., and Mr. George White, M.P., and the board of directors have done much to bring colonial Baptists into living union with the denomination at home. It is little less than a scandal that English Baptists should have been so self-centred. They were Little Englanders in denominational policy. At last they have caught the spirit of empire, and look with expectancy

to the spread through their own denomination of that kingdom which shall extend its beneficent sway over all the earth.

The Baptist ministry has lost two preachers from the settled pastorate whose names have been household words for half a lifetime. The Rev. E. G. Gange, of Bristol, and afterwards of Regent's Park, felt that he must seek relief from the strain of continuous preaching and the burdens of responsibility. Mr. Gange happily continues to take services, and, as he says, "has retired to hard work." In 1900, the Rev. Charles Williams, of Accrington, resigned his pastorate. He had been for fifty years in the ministry of one Church. All over the country his name has been known as one of the stalwarts, not only in struggles for civic and religious liberty, but in conflicts against unrighteousness, intemperance, and other forms of evil. He had the foremost place in originating the Augmentation Fund, and, together with Dr. Landels, laid the basis of the Annuity Fund. In these works he rendered assistance to those who are most worthy of help, and most likely to be forgotten by the denomination. In Lancashire he was for many years more powerful than any ecclesiastic. His word carried more weight and his influence counted for more in the support of any cause. The Missionary Society for many years received his help, and upon more than one occasion made him its special ambassador to brethren in the field. He was the constant helper of the Baptist Union, serving upon its council and committees for a number of years. Indeed, sometimes he was the committee and the executive. The year of his presidency, 1886, was memorable by the fusing of the two sections of Baptists. Mr. Williams is continuously engaged in denominational work. He contributes to the *Baptist Times*, and occasionally to other publications, but his most congenial occupation is in connection with the affairs of the Union. Few men have been permitted to render such long and useful service.

The success of the "Forward" mission movement has compelled Baptists to think whether they should not attempt

something upon the lines of a central mission. The subject has been for years before those in London who have realised the inadequacy of the ordinary Church in the centre of business houses to meet the needs of those who are away from home and for the most part left to themselves on the Lord's Day and during the evenings. Some of the central Churches are dying for the want of a congregation, though thousands of young men and women throng the streets and pass their doors. Adaptation is one of the laws of Church life, and Baptists are beginning to learn it. Bloomsbury Chapel, with nearly seventy years of splendid history, has felt the strain of changed circumstances. During the ministry of the Rev. J. P. Chown Bloomsbury was a great centre of religious life, but Mr. Chown was a man of wonderful versatility and an attractive personality, and even he felt the drift of the people to the suburbs. Brave attempts to stem the tide have since been made, and not without some success, the work of Mr. Baillie and Mr. Gibbon is not forgotten, but the crowds ceased to come to Bloomsbury. An opportunity presented itself for making the experiment of a central mission in the historic premises which have been associated with Baptist traditions ever since Sir Morton Peto laid the foundation stone. The President of the London Baptist Association, Mr. Marnham, generously lent his aid, and Mr. Bradford, whose services to the London Churches are beginning to be realised, entered into the new scheme. But a central mission requires a man about whom it can centre. Mr. Phillips, of Norwich, was called to lead not a forlorn hope, but an enterprise as hopeful as any to which a Baptist minister in modern times has been invited. Mr. Phillips comes from the mountains. He went to Sunday-school at Prescelly, and could look out upon the frowning heights. He was baptised in the river, at the spot known as William's Ford, because there William Jones, the famous preacher, immersed his converts. At college he had a brilliant career, and during his ministry at Kettering and Norwich has become well known as

a spiritual force in the Free Churches. The new enterprise has yet to justify itself, but, under the strong and wise leadership of the men who are responsible, it should prove of untold good to the young people in business houses and provide for Baptists an object lesson in the art of resuscitating central Churches.

Recent legislation has driven the Baptists into the political arena, and has prompted some to become candidates for Parliament who, under ordinary circumstances, would have preferred to devote their energies to other spheres of activity. The history of the struggle to free education from the control of the priests shows how large a part Baptists have taken to secure liberty of conscience for the teaching profession and the parents of the children. Many supposed that the conflict of the sects in the schools was almost at an end. Nonconformists led the pioneer movement for popular education. A Bishop of London declared that a Schism Bill was necessary because Dissenters were endeavouring to draw children to their schools. The first elementary school for the poor was founded in connection with a Nonconformist Church in Southwark, where children were received "without distinction of parties, the general good being intended." The Society of Friends claim Joseph Lancaster, the pioneer of the modern elementary school. His plans were denounced by the clergy, because they gave no place to sectarian religious teaching. The National School Society was formed not so much to promote education as to counteract the Lancastrian system, and to strengthen the position of the Established Church. In 1820 Nonconformists had to fight the Bill introduced by Brougham, which provided that every schoolmaster was to be a communicant, and be chosen by the clergyman of the parish, who was to regulate the teaching. Twenty-three years later it was the opposition of the Free Churches that destroyed the Factories Education Bill, which would not allow a factory child to attend a Nonconformist school, and required that the Church Catechism should

be taught to all whose parents did not object. The Education Act of 1870 was not accepted as a settlement by Nonconformists, though it was a great advance, when Mr. Forster declared that the intention of the measure was "the education of the people's children by the people's officers chosen in their local assemblies, controlled by the people's representatives in Parliament." That object was very imperfectly attained. The operation of the Minutes of Council and of the Acts of 1870 and 1876 fostered a vast denominational system by the side of the board schools. It enabled ten thousand two hundred and thirty-nine English and Welsh parishes to keep out the School Board, and therefore to avoid providing for the education of the people's children controlled by the people's officers. Private management remained in the place of public control, and an ecclesiastical monopoly was strengthened and established by the State. It was a surprise to Free Churchmen when, after the crushing defeat of Mr. Diggle's party upon the London School Board at the end of the religious controversy which did more to make that ill-fated institution unpopular than anything else, it was learned that Mr. Athelstan Riley and the bishops had captured the Government, and that the recommendation of Convocation, endorsed by the Roman Catholic clergy, formed the substance of a measure promoted by the Government. In 1891 Mr. Athelstan Riley, the representative of the English Church Union and of a body known at the time as the Church of England Voluntary Schools Defence Union, with the Rev. J. J. Coxhead, raised the question of the religious teaching in the schools. Mr. Riley called it "the question of the right of the parents to determine the faith in which their children should be educated," but those who were engaged in the controversy knew perfectly well that the priests, and not the parents, were the persons consulted. From 1891 until the defeat of Mr. Diggle at the polls it was impossible to get together a deputation of parents whose children were actually in Board schools, and who were

dissatisfied with the religious instruction given to their little ones. Mr. Riley, defeated upon the Thames Embankment, turned to Convocation and to Parliament. The English Church Union saw its opportunity when the war craze possessed the English people. In Parliament, the proposals for the abolition of School Boards and the perpetuation of clerical tests for teachers were fought sternly by a few members of the Opposition, among whom Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. George White, with a little group of educationalists, led by Dr. Macnamara, fought the measure clause by clause and line by line, until free discussion by the representatives of the people was stifled, and the measure was carried. Professor Fairbairn and the leaders of Nonconformity—perhaps the most influential and representative Nonconformist deputation of modern times—waited upon the Prime Minister, and told him plainly that the measure could not and would not be accepted by Free Churchmen. Professor Fairbairn said, “In the event of the Bill becoming law, we will not submit.”

The Baptist Union was the first great religious body to formally pronounce its determination not to submit to the injustice of the Act. Dr. Clifford, by general consent, became the leader in the citizens’ struggle against the clerics, and Mr. George White, the honoured deacon and Sunday-school superintendent of the Baptist Church at Norwich, was credited with originating the passive resistance campaign, though he did no more than reaffirm the position taken up by Mr. Chamberlain, who declared that “payment of money out of the rates to the denominational schools would be an infringement of the rights of conscience,” and that, should such payment be made, those he represented would only make it under compulsion. He said on February 15th, 1872, “they were not going to fight the bailiffs; they were going to submit in their way; but an alternative was provided for them, an alternative which landed them in great sacrifices, but still permitted them to make a protest. They would

choose the alternative. They would not resist the bailiffs, but preferred that the Board should collect the tax by their means. That form of resistance which was purely passive they meant to make, not however to the law, but to the majority's administration of it." Mr. George White urged that Mr. Chamberlain's threat should be carried out. The Citizens' League was formed. A Baptist deacon became its secretary. Since then the daily papers have told the story of the brave resistance offered by men and women all over the country to an Act which has raised a greater storm of indignation than any other law of modern times. Thirty-one Baptists have suffered imprisonment rather than submit, while ministers and Church members are continually gaining experience of the magistrates' manners, and the methods of the bailiffs' distrainments, rather than voluntarily pay the sectarian rate.

Mr. George White, M.P., will be known as the English member for Nonconformity. He has passed through a hard training. He has worked his way from the first step of the ladder to his present position, and those who know him best trust him most. In Norwich he is the strongest social force in the city, and has rapidly gained a position in the House of Commons which makes his friends wish that he could have entered Parliament earlier in life. His services to the Baptist denomination are well known. He has been a counsellor in many forward movements. During his year's presidency he did much to steer the Assembly clear of difficulties, and to inspire enthusiasm for national righteousness. His presidential address at the City Temple was devoted to the interests of the children. He described himself as the representative of the Sunday-schools. He travelled all over the country, rendering assistance to the Churches. His portrait has been presented to the Church House by Mr. Gould and some friends at Norwich. It is a worthy tribute to the denominational work of one who has now become a national representative of Nonconformity.

The Baptist outlook is full of hope. The denominational statistics, though they show but a small increase for the year, indicate a strengthening of the Baptist position all over the country. In 1903 there were 3,977 chapels; in 1904 there were 3,980. The work of chapel building was almost at a standstill, owing to the raising of special funds. A number of chapels were, however, enlarged, and at the end of the year there was an additional provision of over 17,000 seats for worshippers. The Church membership in 1903 stood at 388,357; a year later it was 394,811. The increase in the number of Sunday-school scholars was over 12,000, and nearly 2,000 additional teachers were reported. It should be remembered that a large number of Baptist Churches are in the rural districts, from which, unhappily for England, the population is ebbing away. No increase can be reasonably expected in the majority of these Churches. If they maintained their position, it would be almost a miracle. Their difficulties in recent years have been enormously increased. During the last five-and-twenty years a great change has come over the relationships of those who dwell in rural parishes. Then people freely went to each other's place of worship; now they stand apart. The parish priest has taken the place of the clergyman. Young people in guilds or in preparation for confirmation are urged to promise solemnly never to enter the Dissenting place of worship. Men like Canon Hammond are going all over the country proclaiming to Church people, "When you go to the chapel, you go against the will of God." Social caste has always been a difficulty to Baptists in the villages. It has caused, not so much among them perhaps as among others, a constant leakage of those whose convictions were not strong enough to stand against the fashion of the people who were anybodies going to church. Nonconformists, and particularly Baptists, have to face a boycott as persistent and cruel, though not so manifest, as the old forms of petty persecution. In the towns and cities Baptists have strengthened their position, though

a number of prominent Churches are still without ministers. Turning from England to the wider field of Baptist activity, the last returns, showing a comparison of 1901 with 1903, give an increase in the number of Churches from 58,029 to 71,488, and of ministers from 41,870 to 51,245; of members from 5,454,699 to 6,976,788; and of Sunday-school scholars from 2,586,692 to 2,779,568—an increase of a million and a half in the membership, as against an increase for the previous three years of about 300,000. This is accounted for by the inclusion of Baptists who are known as the Disciples of Christ, who number rather more than a million members. Baptists outside the Baptist denomination number a great multitude. In England alone, there are some 400 Baptist Churches not in membership with the Baptist Union. They are identical in their polity and practice with their brethren, but they have yet to learn that the old individualism in Church government has ceased to meet the requirements of the time. Our fathers were very independent congregationalists; they were jealous of any interference with the domestic arrangement of the household of faith. They regarded the Church as a republic of saints. They were congregationalists of the extreme type. Modern Baptists have lost some of the old love for individualism. No wonder when in the same village two Baptist chapels may be found struggling to maintain a precarious existence, with ministers receiving less than a mechanic's wage and enmity and animosity being instilled into the minds of the people, who should be worshipping under one roof, and living as co-operators rather than competitors in Christian activity! The problem in the near future for the Baptists is, How can the Churches conserve their individual rights and yet combine in a fellowship strong enough to make the decisions of the whole binding upon every part of the federation?

The revival of sacerdotalism gives a new opportunity to the Baptists. Sacerdotalism by its doctrine of the Church limits

the universality of Divine grace; it confines it to a particular form of ecclesiastical organisation, for which there is no clear Scriptural warrant; Baptists hold that all good is of God, and that the Holy Spirit is not restricted to any order of ministers, or particular channel of communication between God and man. Sacerdotalism puts its clergy and its ceremonies between the sinner and the Saviour; Baptists insist that there is one God and one Mediator between man and God, and that each soul has free access to the Father through Christ. The common people are sickened by the strife of sects and the pretensions of official religion. Among the democracy denominationalism is almost dead. Men are asking whether the complex and contradictory thing that is popularly described as Christianity has Christ's authority, or whether it is the invention of those who follow Him afar off both in time and spirit. The Baptists stand for the supreme authority of Jesus Christ in the Church and over every department of life. If they are true to their own teaching they will present not a denomination or an ecclesiastical polity, but the Gospel message and the example of the Man Christ Jesus. In that humiliating volume, "The *Daily News* Census of Attendance at Places of Worship in London," Mr. Mudie Smith gives this suggestive passage: "Our forefathers were content with a heaven after death; we demand a heaven here. They regarded themselves as pilgrims with no continuing city, mere desert sojourners; we are determined that this metropolis shall become the city of God. Nothing has so alienated the people from the ministrations of the word as the age-long opposition of the Churches to their most elementary rights as human beings." That terrible testimony is borne out by Mr. Lecky, who affirms that "Anglicanism was from the beginning at once the most servile and most efficient agent of tyranny." J. R. Green in 1867, while still a clergyman, wrote to Freeman: "What hinders reform? The want of education among the people. And what hinders education but the present attempt at a sectarian, and not a

national, system? And what hinders a national system of education but the Church?" It must be confessed that the Free Churches have not always been upon the side of righteousness. They have shown too much fear of consequences and too much readiness not to see the needs of the people. The demand of our time is not for Labour Churches, which have been tried and shown to be as much class institutions as the Churches of the rich; the need is not for an alliance with the democracy which shall be simply an echo of the utterances of the men who stand as the leaders of the toilers. The demand is as old as the Gospel. It is for a Church which shall be true to its great Founder, which shall apply, as the Anabaptists did, the teaching of Christ to every department of life. It is an alarming and significant fact that the adult membership of temperance societies in connection with the Churches has decreased during recent years, while the consumption of alcoholic drinks has increased. In the opening year of the century the people of England spent nearly a hundred and eighty millions upon intoxicants; it is estimated that, if those of the working classes who were total abstainers be subtracted, eight shillings was the average weekly sum spent by the adult working men and women of this country. A sober democracy means an intelligent electorate. To the drink problem the Baptists are giving some attention.

Baptist Churches have contributed to the purity of the nation's life. In common with other Christians in the great federation of Evangelical Free Churches, they have borne their witness to national righteousness. They have stood in the fighting line to secure equality before the law for all citizens. They ask for no liberty which they are not prepared to concede to others. So far as they are political, it is for national, and not denominational, ends. They are opposed to the State establishment of religion, but not to the Church of England as a Church. They believe that any State establishment of Christianity is foreign to the teaching of the New Testament,

and that, in proportion as the nation gives privilege to one denomination, it necessarily persecutes the others. In the near future Baptists may remember their old testimony against the growing wealth of the rich and the increasing poverty of the poor. They may come back to the preaching of their ancestors and discover that the words of their President in the first year of the century have an ethical meaning deeper than they know. He said: "The faiths that make the Churches divisive and anti-social and supporters of the interests of classes and sections of society, and so render the cause of Christ of none effect, are dying. They must die. All that opposes brotherhood in the Churches of the Son of man has to be cast out, and is being cast out. The test of a standing or falling Church is its influence on the brotherhood of mankind."

Among Baptists there has been a return of the evangelistic note in pulpit utterances. The salvation of the individual has been the unannounced object of preaching. Foremost ministers have set the example, and never was the ministry of the Baptist Churches more evangelical than it is to-day. It is recognised that the Churches exist to mould men into the likeness of the Divine Christ, and that the message of salvation is the Gospel of the Cross. Baptists have but to be true to their own history, and the glory of their Zion shall only be dimmed by the brightness of that greater Zion that shall include all who trust and serve the Christ. To them the call is, Go forward in the spirit of the past with the methods of the present.

"There shall come, from out this noise of strife and groaning,
 A broader and a juster brotherhood,
 A deep equality of aim, postponing
 All selfish seeking to the general good ;
 There shall come a time when each shall to another
 Be as Christ would have him, brother unto brother."

And He shall reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet.

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